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S H O R T V I E W
O F T H E
T E N E T S
O F

*Tritheists, Sabellians, Trinitarians,
Arians, and Socinians;*

*Intended to assist plain Christians in forming
a general Idea of the principal Opinions
held on the Trinity, and of the Difficulties
attending them, and to promote Candour
and Charity among those who differ in their
Apprehensions on that Subject.*

The SECOND EDITION, with IMPROVEMENTS,
AND AN
APPENDIX on the WORSHIP of
J E S U S C H R I S T.

Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant? To his
own Master he standeth or falleth.

With all Lowliness and Meekness, with long Suffering, for-
bearing one another in Love; eadeavouring to keep the
Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. PAUL.

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A

SHORT VIEW, &c.

IT is well known, that the doctrine of the Trinity, from the fourth century to the present time, has been the occasion of much debate and enmity among christians. As the truth can be but one, and all besides is error, it were to be wished that, in the present instance, all could be brought to unite in the just discernment and acknowledgment of it. But, however it may be accounted for, all attempts to that purpose have hitherto proved ineffectual. The ancients convened councils to ascertain with a minute accuracy, the points of faith to be received, and the heresies and errors to be avoided on this subject ; they composed Creeds, backed with denun-

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ciations of everlasting vengeance on those who departed from them, and engaged the civil powers to enforce their decisions by penal laws, and the infliction of *wholesome severities* (such as fines, confiscations, imprisonment, exile, and death) on those who rejected them. But, plausible as these expedients might appear in theory, they had a contrary effect when reduced to practice. They produced discord, confusion, hatred, and every evil work. In the revolution of human affairs there appeared councils against councils, creeds against creeds, fathers against fathers, and civil powers against civil powers. Nor have the moderns been more successful. In the present century, Clarke and Waterland, Emlyn and Boyse, Knight, Jackson, Peirce, Gastrel, Watts, Tomkins, and many others, have searched the scriptures, examined antiquity, and exerted all the powers of reason to fix the proper ideas we are to form of the sacred three, into whose names christians are baptized; how they are distinct; and how united as one God; but their researches and reasonings led them to very *different* conclusions. Within these five or six years past, Ben Mordecai, Elliot, Lindsey, Burgh, Jebb, Randolph, Bingham, Robinson, Horne, and many more have engaged in the same intricate disquisitions, but the result, as might have been foreseen, has not been *Unity*. Christians are not yet agreed whether the one God whom they wor-
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ship be one person, or three persons, or neither, but one essence ; whether Jesus Christ be a mere man, or Almighty God and Man united in one person ; or neither, but a super-angelic spirit made flesh ; whether the Holy Ghost be a distinct spirit from the Father and the Son, or a mere attribute and energy of the Father.

Perhaps the divine being has permitted these differences as a part of men's trial ; that the lazy and implicit believer might be discriminated from the serious and diligent enquirer, and that christians, in maintaining their several opinions of the trinity, might have an opportunity of exercising the virtues of meekness and candour, toleration and benevolence towards each other. To accomplish this desirable end, the several tenets of Tritheists, Sabellians, Trinitarians, Arians, and Socinians are made to pass in review before the reader. The advantage proposed from this review is the attainment of a *precise* and *determinate idea* of what the doctrine of the trinity is in itself, as received by those who have been generally approved for their learning and *soundness* ; and what the extremes are on either side of it. It is certain, there are many among the unlearned who are very zealous for the doctrine itself, without any *specifick* ideas of what it is ; while those who have such ideas either run into the extremes of Tritheism and Arianism, or the

one hand, or Sabellianism and Socinianism, on the other. It will appear in the sequel, that many of those who use the same *orthodox* terms to express the doctrine, entertain opposite notions of it; and that those who differ most widely in words, come very near, if not quite agree, in the thing meant; which should be a reason for regarding each other as christian brethren. To a person who hath dispassionately attended to the progress of the trinitarian controversy, it will not seem improbable, that the several *heresies* (as they are commonly called) before referred to, have been admitted from pious and upright motives, either to preclude some error apprehended dangerous, or to secure some truth apprehended scriptural and important, in relation to the trinity. For example, to maintain the *perfect equality* of the sacred three, as distinct and intelligent agents, one may inadvertently lose the *divine unity* which is a fundamental principle of true religion, and slide into the opinion of three equal Gods. Another, perceiving this dangerous extreme, thinks he cannot be at too great a distance from it, and gives up the *real* personality of the Son, (except as mere man) and that of the holy Spirit, and so runs into Sabellianism, or Socinianism. A third, solicitous to avoid the extremes of three equal Gods, and yet maintain the *real* personality of the sacred three, without losing the di-
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vine unity, embraces Arianism, or Semi-arianism. The great difficulty is to keep clear of these several extremes in our ideas of the Trinity. If this difficulty were perceived, in a perspicuous manner, it seemed probable to the author, it would do more towards promoting a spirit of candour and benevolence among christians of different opinions on the subject under consideration, than a thousand pious exhortations, however just and proper, to that end. This is the reason of the particular discussion of the principles of Trithemism, Sabellianism, Arianism, and Socinianism, in this pamphlet. In the apprehension of the author, it seems hardly possible for a person of an ingenuous, unbigotted, and intelligent mind, who clearly perceived the *facility* of erring with the most upright views, into one or other of these systems, could seriously believe that all who were not of his persuasion were either fools, or knaves, and that, *without doubt*, they *should perish everlastingly*.

The controversy relating to the Trinity is become very voluminous. A great part of it turns upon a critical skill in the learned languages and speculations concerning *essence*, *emanation*, *consubstantial hypostases*, &c. About these speculations, plain and unlearned christians need not trouble themselves, as the sacred scriptures are totally silent respecting them. Their concern is
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to believe neither more nor less relating to Father, Son, and Spirit, than is expressly asserted, or evidently implied in divine revelation: that is, their first enquiry should be, whether it be expressly asserted in that revelation, that the one true God, whom Moses and the Prophets, Jesus Christ and his Apostles preached, is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost? This is a question of fact, and as such it ought to be determined: If explicitly determined in scripture in the affirmative, nothing remains but to receive it on that authority; in like manner as other facts are admitted in nature, the mode which is inexplicable. But if not so affirmed and determined; the controversy is whose reasonings, speculations, and inferences from scripture are the most just and conclusive; and certainly, this is a reason for mutual charity in our differences of opinion on so profound and mysterious a subject, as the ever blessed God. If these considerations should carry no weight with them, still it should be recollected, that the truth of God needs not passionate invectives and malignant reproaches for its support and defence. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. The end of the commandment is charity.* Every man is to examine and judge in the best manner he can for himself, as every man is to stand or fall to his own master. "The lowest understanding," (to use the words of Dr. Dodderidge)

Doddridge) “ the meanest education, the most contemptible abilities, may suffice to give hard names, and to pronounce severe censures; a harsh anathema may be learnt by heart, and furiously repeated by one that could scarce read it, and, as was in truth the case in some ancient councils, may be signed by those that cannot write their Names^a.”—In prosecuting the design above mentioned, of giving a short view of the tenets of Tritheists, Sabellians, &c. &c. we begin with those of Tritheists.

I. Tritheists believe “ that there is in the deity, three natures or substances absolutely equal in all respects, and joined together by no common essence. The chief of this Sect was John Ascusnaga, a Syrian philosopher, and at the same time a Monophysite. One of the warmest Defenders of this Doctrine was John Philoponus, an Alexandrian philosopher and grammarian of the highest reputation; and hence he has been considered by many as the author of this sect, whose members have consequently derived from him the title of Philoponists^b. ”

The Tritheists, correspondent to their Name, appear from this account to hold three equal Gods. Dr. South, in the epistle dedicatory to

^a A Sermon on Christian Candour and Unanimity.

^b Mosheim's Ecel. Hist. vol. 1. p. 473

the third volume of his sermons, sadly complains of Tritheists who injured and exposed the honour and fundamental articles of the faith of the church of England, by pretending to defend them against the Socinians, by which means they did more mischief than the Socinians themselves. He says, the case in England, at that time, came too near that of Poland about an hundred and twenty or thirty years before, when the *doctrine of three distinct infinite spirits* began and led the dance, and was quickly followed (as the design was laid) by Socinianism; and wishes that the method taken *there*, might not have the like issue *here*.

II. We are in the next place to give an account of the Sabellian Tenets. Sabellius lived in the third century. Of his heresy there are different accounts. Dr. Cudworth saith, that his doctrine was no other than this “ that there is but one hypostasis or *single individual essence* of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and consequently, that they are indeed but *three names*, or *notions*, or *modes* of one and the self same thing^c.” Epiphanius saith; in the one substance of the deity Sabellius put three names; as in man are reckoned body, soul, and spirit^d. Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, was contemporary

^c Intellectual System. chap. 4. p. 605.

^d Ben Mordecai, lett. 1. p. 15. See Cave's Hist. litt. p. 83.
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with Sabellius, and is considered as holding the same opinion with him. His Doctrine, according to Mosheim, was, " that the Son and the Holy Ghost exist in God in the same manner as the faculties of *reason* and *activity* do in man : that Christ was born a mere man ; but that the *reason* or *wisdom* of the father descended into him, and by him wrought miracles upon earth, and instructed the nations : and, finally, that, on account of this union of the *divine word* with the *man* Jesus, Christ might, though improperly, be called *God*." Two councils were called to examine the opinions of this bishop, the last of which was assembled in the year 269, and degraded him from the episcopal order.

III. The true faith of the Trinity is supposed to lie between Tritheism and Sabellianism, or to consist partly of the one and partly of the other ; for Trinitarians acknowledge with Tritheists, that the three persons are *each God*, in the highest sense, and with the Sabellians, that they have one *individual essence*. To keep clear of these two extremes (the Scylla and Charybdis in theology) is a very great difficulty. Dr. Sherlock, by maintaining with too much strictness the distinct personality of father, son, and spirit, verged into Tritheism ; while Dr. South, by too rigorously asserting the unity, verged into Sabellianism. To prevent confusion and error on a

e Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 248.

point of so much consequence, it has been asked, whether the Trinity is to be considered as one infinite spirit, having three distinctions called persons; or three infinite spirits inseparably united. Here Trinitarians are divided; some maintaining the former opinion, and others the latter. Those who hold the Trinity to be one infinite spirit are called *nominal* or *modal* Trinitarians, because they are supposed to hold only a trinity of *names*, or *modes*, of one spirit: and those who hold the trinity to be three spirits, or substances, mysteriously joined, are called *Realists*; as they really maintain three persons in the obvious acceptation of the word person. Dr. South, Dr. Wallis, Mr. Hooker, Mr. Baxter, Bishop Burnet, Dr. Watts, and most of the schoolmen were *Nominals*. Bishop Bull, Bishop Fowler, Dr. Cudworth, Episcopius, Dr. Sherlock, Mr. How, Dr. Waterland, were *Realists*. These two sorts of Trinitarians are generally esteemed orthodox, though their ideas of the one true God, be as different as one spirit, and the union of three spirits. In the last age they had warm contentions. The Realists bore hard on the Nominals as to the idea they affixed to the word *person*; and they seldom attempt a definition of it, as they use it in a sense different from what it means when applied to men. Dr.

f Ben Mordecai, Lett. 1. p. 36. 37. Dr. Watts's Important Questions, p. 174, 8vo.

Wallis

Wallis said, the three persons were three *some-whats*. Their contentions ran so high, in the year 1695, that the Vice Chancellor of Oxford, with the heads of Colleges and Halls, at a general meeting at Oxford, decreed the principles of the Realists *heretical*, and contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England. The Realists on the other hand asserted, that what the Oxford heads had condemned, as heretical, was the Nicene faith, and that of the Church of England: and Dr. Sherlock said, he would, any day in the year, procure a meeting, of twice as many as wise and learned men, to censure their decrees. Thus it remains undecided, whether the *Realists* or the *Nominals* are orthodox. The former seem inclining towards Tritheism, and the latter towards Sabellianism. To decide between them, these two questions obviously occur. Doth the scripture *explicitly* affirm that the one true God is three infinite spirits, or minds, or substances united? or one infinite spirit, in which are three persons, father, son, and holy ghost? The true answer is, the scripture *explicitly* affirms *neither*. Both parties build their opinions on *reasonings* and deductions from scripture.

Dr. Watts observes, “ that so far as our ideas of arithmetic and reason can reach, this seems to be a plain truth; *if one infinite spirit be one God, two or three infinite spirits must be two or three Gods.*

g Ben Mordecai, Lett. 1. p. 37, 38.

And though the patrons of this opinion suppose these three spirits to be so nearly united as to be called one God, merely to avoid the charge of Polytheism, yet it must be granted that this *one God* must be one *complex, infinite being, or spirit*, made up of three single, infinite beings, or spirits; which is such a notion of the one true God, as I think neither reason nor revelation will admit; and yet, if it were the true notion of the one God, it is very strange that scripture should not clearly and expressly reveal it^b. How easily might a realist have retorted on the good doctor! The scripture speaks of father, son, and spirit, in such terms as, according to the plain and obvious meaning of words, suit only three distinct persons, or minds having a distinct consciousness, thought, and will; and yet if it were the true notion of the one God, that these three have only one numerical consciousness, thought, and will, and subsist in one infinite mind, or spirit, *it is very strange that scripture should not clearly and expressly reveal it*. But let us attend to the Realist himself. "To say there are three divine persons, and not three distinct infinite minds, is both heresy and nonsense." "It is Sabellian jargonry," says anotherⁱ. This charge of heresy, nonsense, and Sabellian jargonry, by the *Realists*,

^b Watts's Important Questions.

ⁱ Dr. Sherlock and Dr. Cudworth, as quoted by Ben Mordecai, Lett. 1. p. 37.

against

against the *Nominals*, should not be admitted without sufficient evidence. Let the tenets of the *Nominals* be therefore recited.—Dr. Watts saith, “ there are several considerations which lead me to agree with this general opinion of *almost* all our divines, in the two last centuries, (viz.) that *the godhead of Christ is the same individual godhead with that of the father* ; and that his divine nature is not *another* infinite spirit distinct from the father, whatever sublime distinctions there may be in that one infinite spirit ; one of which (viz.) the *word* or *wisdom*, may perhaps have a more peculiar respect to the second person in the trinity (viz.) the son ; and the other (viz.) the *power of God*, to the holy ghost^k.”—St. Austin explains the trinity by *mind*, *wisdom*, and *love*!.—Calvin saith, that every man’s mind inclines to this ; first to consider *God*, then the *wisdom* rising out of him, and last of all, the *power* by which he executes his decrees^m.”—Mr. Nye saith, “ the first person of the trinity is unbegotten mind ; or original wisdom, called the father : next is the *logos*, reflex or *begotten wisdom*, generated by God’s contemplating and knowing his own perfections, which is named the *son* : lastly, the divine *volition*, or *love*, God’s eternal spiration of love towards himself, on that account fitly

^k Important Questions, p. 130.

^l Ben Mordecai, let. 1. p. 121.

^m Institutes, b. 1. c. 13. §. 18.

called spirit.—The three persons differ as a mind and its acts.”—“ Three persons, the father, son, and holy spirit ; the father, the *cause* of all things ; the son his *wisdom* and *word* ; the holy spirit his *virtue* and *power*.”—

By comparing these extracts from the writings of nominal Trinitarians, with the preceding account of the doctrine of Sabellius, and of Bishop Paul of Samosata, the Reader may judge of the ground of the charges brought by the Realists. Paul of Samosata taught “ that the son and holy ghost exist in God in the same manner as the faculties of *reason* and *activity* do in man.”—St. Austin explains the Trinity by *mind*, *wisdom*, and *love*.—Calvin. “ The father is reckoned first, and then *of him* the son, and after *of them both*, the holy ghost. For every man’s mind inclineth to this, first to consider *God*, then the *wisdom* rising out of him, and last of all the *power* by which he executes his decrees.”—Reader. Wherein doth the Trinity of that heretic Paul of Samosata differ from the Trinity of St. Austin and Calvin ? The three persons in that of both, differ only as a mind and its acts. Can one spirit or mind be three persons ? Mr. Bradbury charges Dr. Watts with *destroying* a Trinity of persons, because he resembled the being of God to the soul of man ; and with evaporating the

” S. Nye on the trinity, p. 19. 22.

• The French Confession, p. 70. and the Belgic Confession, p. 89, as cited by Mr. Emlyn.

divinity of Christ into an Attribute*. Hath this harsh accusation any appearance of truth to support it? Do the notions of Sabellians and *nominal* Trinitarians coincide in regard to the Trinity, as it is often asserted? or are they very different?—These are questions left to the reader to decide as it may seem meet.—Dr. Sherlock brings another charge against the *Nominals*, and saith, “ though the *Nominals* and *Socinians* differ in some terms of speech, yet the *Socinians* say, and I think *very truly*, that there is no considerable difference in their faith, as they state it^p.” As it is hardly prudent to trust to the representation of an adversary, in a matter of so much consequence, I shall immediately lay before the reader the tenets of the *Socinians*, that he may judge for himself of this charge also.

IV. The *Socinians* conceive the deity to be one, as to person and essence^q, or one infinite spirit, called in scripture, One God the Father; Christ is a mere man like other men, having received his birth in a miraculous manner, of the virgin Mary^r. The wisdom of the father was ma-

* Dr. Watts's Works, lately published, vol. 2, p. 206. 186.

^p Dr. Sherlock's distinction between real and nominal Trinitarians compared, p. 12. as cited in a pamphlet entitled, Reflections on Mr. Peirce's Answer to Mr. Enty.

^q Toulmin's Life of *Socinus*, p. 211.

^r Ibid. p. 178.

nifested in him, by the doctrines he taught, and the power of the father, by the miraculous works he performed. The holy spirit is an attribute of the father, or the father himself.

Having now the principles of the Sabellians, nominal Trinitarians, and Socinians before us, let us consider whether they nearly agree, as has been suggested by the Realists.

The Sabellian, and nominal Trinitarian worship God as a Trinity; but this Trinity is one infinite mind, or spirit, in which *wisdom*, *love*, or *power* dwells. The Socinian doth not worship God as a Trinity, but as one infinite mind or spirit, and that spirit possesses eternal wisdom, love, or power. Here the object of worship is *precisely* the same, only that object is described by different words.—Paul of Samosata, the Sabellian, saith, that the reason or wisdom of the father, descended on the man Jesus, and by him worked miracles, &c.—The nominal Trinitarian saith, that *wisdom*, the second person in the Trinity, was united with the man Jesus, so that he was God and Man in one person.—The Socinian saith, that Jesus was a mere man, but the logos, or wisdom of God, was manifested in him. Hence he was Emmanuel, or God with us.

† Lindsey's Sequel, chap. 4.

* Ibid. p. 175.

“ God,” saith Mr. Lindsey, “ was with us in Christ, by his wisdom and power communicated to him for the instruction and benefit of mankind.” Here also the difference consists, principally, about calling the *logos*, or *wisdom* of God, a divine person.

The scriptures speak of the sufferings and death of the son of God as a ransom for sin; and Trinitarians apprehend a peculiar advantage attending their scheme in this view, as none but an infinite God, say they, could make satisfaction for sin, which being committed against God, deserves infinite punishment. Even here, perhaps the difference between the nominal Trinitarian and Socinian, may not be so great as at first imagined. The Socinian asks how this infinite satisfaction was made? Was it not by the death of Christ, as the apostle saith we are reconciled to God by the death of his son? Rom. v. 10.—The Nominal cannot deny it.—Well then, replies the Socinian, did the *immortal* God die? Was eternal *wisdom*, whom you improperly call the second person in the trinity, *crucified* and *slain*?—What can the Nominal answer? If he answer in the affirmative, it is a most horrid declaration. He will evade a plain answer if he can, and say the *God-man* suffered and died; or, it is a mystery. But the Socinian will not let it so pass. Tell me ingenuously, he will say, do you mean
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that the *divine nature* of Christ, according to your notion, suffered and died?—The truth will come out at last.—“No; perfect deity is *impassible and immortal*.”—I understand you rejoins the Socinian, a mere man, according to your scheme, made infinite satisfaction; as a mere man suffered and died; and you mean no more when you assert that the *God-man* suffered and died; attributing to the whole person, according to your notion, what in strictness of speech is applicable to him as man only; and with equal propriety you might have said that the most high God was a babe; slept; was hungry; fatigued; and thirsty; as all this might with truth be predicated of the *man* Jesus.—Where doth the scripture assert that God could not forgive sin without infinite satisfaction? or that Christ paid such a satisfaction?—But I will press the matter no further. The difference between us consists chiefly in this; you and the Sabellian use orthodox terms, and I do not: you express yourselves by what appears to me, improper terms; since, in the sense you affirm God to be three persons, in one spiritual substance, every good man may be said to be *three persons*; as every good man has a *mind* endowed with *wisdom*, and *love* or *power*. Upon the whole we nearly agree. You say the man Jesus bore the sufferings and death of the cross to make infinite satisfaction for the sins of mankind; and I say he suffered and died to save them.

Whatever

Whatever the reader may think of this short dialogue, it is the opinion of the author, that if the nominal Trinitarian, and Socinian, had been contemporaries with Paul of Samosata, and avowed their sentiments before the council which deposed him, they would have been excommunicated as *heretics*. This, however, may be justly urged in their favour, that they clearly maintain that fundamental principle of all true religion, the *unity* of God, whatever they may do with respect to the real personality of the son (excepting as mere man) and of the holy spirit. On the contrary, the Realists as clearly maintain the distinct personality of the *sacred three*; but whether they hold the *unity* has been questioned. As the observations of the Realists, on the system of the Nominals, have been recited, it is but equity to recite, in return, the observations of the Nominals on that of the Realists. The reflections of Dr. Watts have been already quoted, *that if one infinite spirit be one God, two or three infinite spirits must be two or three Gods, &c.* Bishop Burnet, on the articles, speaking of the opinion of the Realists, saith, "it is in a good degree intelligible; but adds, it seems hard to reconcile it with the idea of unity, which seems to belong to a being of infinite perfection, and with the many express declarations that are made in the scriptures, concerning the unity of God." Perhaps the Bishop

had in his thoughts that declaration of our Saviour, *God is a spirit*, not three spirits. However this might be, here is a sad dilemma. If we embrace the notion of the Nominals, in regard to the Trinity, we are *Sabellians*, according to the Realists. If, on the other hand, we embrace the notion of the Realists, we give up, according to the Nominals, the scriptural unity of God, and hold three Gods. This last imputation seems just : for if we say, that the three persons are co-equal, according to the system of the Realists, and each God, it is plain they are three equal Gods ; but the Realists say, to preserve the unity, that the three are inseparably joined in one substance. Be it so : all that this addition amounts to, according to the common principles of reason is, they are *three equal Gods united in one substance*.

It should seem from hence, that the phrase, the *only true God*, or the *one God*, doth not denote one of the three persons, nor the three together, but the one *individual essence* of the three ; which idea of unity appears hard to be reconciled with many passages of scripture, such as, *To us there is but one God the Father ; this is life eternal to know thee (the Father) to be the only true God ; and besides me there is no God* ; that is, according to

1 Cor. viii. 6. John xvii. 1. 3. Isa. xlv. 6.

the

the last of these passages, besides *me* the *undivided essence* of father, son, and spirit, there is no God. But the pronoun *me*, according to the obvious meaning of the word, is characteristic of person, not of essence; and then the passage must run, besides *me*, the *three* divine persons, there is no God. These are mentioned as difficulties, of which the reader may judge as he pleases. The manner in which the Realists endeavour to obviate the objection of the Nominals, in regard to their holding more Gods than one, is this; they say, the Father is the *only self-existent* God, but that the son is God of, or from God, and that the holy spirit is God from the Father and the Son, and thus by allowing a *subordination* of the Son and Spirit, to the Father, (at the same time they have one generical nature) they apprehend they maintain the divine unity, consistently with the distinct personality of the sacred three. They allow, that if they held the three persons to be equally *underived* and *self-existent*, the charge of the Nominals, Socinians, and Arians, in relation to their holding three co-ordinate and supreme Gods, would be just. Dr. Waterland, the learned and able opposer of Dr. Clarke, saith, " the common answer to the charge of Tritheism, or Ditheism (two Gods) as well of the postnicene, as antenicene fathers, was — that there is but *one head, root, fountain, father* of all,

not

not in respect of *authority*, but of *substance*, also.—
 This was the concurrent sense of all in general,
 and to this they chiefly resolved the *unity* of the
 Godhead. Two *unoriginate* divine persons, how-
 ever otherwise inseparable, would be two Gods
 according to the ancients^w.” Bishop Pearson,
 on the Creed, saith, “ that if there were more
 than one” (of the three persons) “ which were
 from *none*, it could not be denied but there were
more Gods than one.—There can be but one per-
 son originally, of himself, subsisting in that infi-
 nite being ; because a *plurality of persons, so sub-*
sisting, would necessarily imply a multiplicity of Gods.
 —This priority” (of the first person in the trinity)
 “ doth properly and naturally result from the di-
 vine paternity, so that the Son must necessarily be
 second to the Father, from whom he receiveth
 his origination, and the Holy Ghost to the Son.
 Neither can we be thought to want a sufficient
 foundation for the priority of the first person in
 the trinity, if we look upon the numerous tes-
 timonies of the ancient Doctors, who have not
 stuck to call the *Father* the *origin*, the *cause*, the
author, the *root*, the *fountain*, and the *head* of the
Son, or the *whole divinity*.—This *origination*, in

^w Dr. Waterland's Defence of his Queries, p. 84. Second Vindication, p. 207.

^x P. 40.

^y Ibid. p. 134.

the divine paternity, hath been anciently looked upon as the assertion of the unity.—Bishop Beveridge saith, “ the Father is placed first, and really is the first person, not as if he was before the other two, for they are all co-eternal; but because the other two (the Son and Spirit) received their essence from him; for the Son was begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost proceeded both from the Father and the Son; and therefore the Father is termed by the primitive Christians, *the root and the fountain of deity*.” —Lord Chancellor King, who is generally thought to be the author of the Critical History of the Apostle’s Creed, asserts, “ it is the observation of Ruffinus, that in all the eastern creeds, it is, *I believe in one God the Father*; where, if by the eastern, he means the Nicene or Constantinopolitan, it is certainly true; or if he means the ancient creeds, used before either of those, is true, not only of the eastern but of the western also.” —Archbishop Wake, in his catechism, asks this question;—“ How does it appear that Christ received his divine nature from the Father?—A. It can only be known by that revelation which God has made of it in the holy scriptures: where he is, for this reason, said to

z Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 37, 40.

a Private Thoughts, pt. 2, p. 44.

b P. 54.

be the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: the image of the invisible God—to be from God—to have life from the Father, and the like. And upon this account it is, that our Saviour himself says, that *the Father is greater than he.*”—Dr. Owen, on Heb. i. 8, 9. makes this observation; “ God is said to be the God of the Son, in respect of his *divine nature*, as he is his Father, so *his God*; whence he is said to be *God of God*, as having his nature communicated unto him by virtue of his eternal generation^d.”—Mr. Burkit, on John xiv. 28, remarks, “ the Father may be said to be *greater* than Christ in regard to his paternity, as being the fountain of the Deity. The Father is of himself, but the Son is begotten of the Father.”—Bishop Bull, also, observes, in his defence of the Nicene faith: “ According to the opinion of the Ancients, to which also common sense agreeth; if there were in the divinity, two *unbegotten*, or two *independent* principles, it would follow, not only that the Father would be deprived of that *pre-eminence*, by which he has his divinity of himself, that is, from no other; but also, that we must make *two Gods*. But now, on the contrary, if we allow the *subordination*, by which the Father alone is God of himself, and the Son is God from God the

^c Dr. Tucker's brief and dispassionate View, p. 17.

^d P. 109.

Father; then those ancient writers thought both the *pre-eminence* of the Father, and the *monarchy* of the universe would be preserved entire.^e This quotation from Bishop Bull 'deserves the greater attention, as he wrote against the Arians and Socinians, on the one hand, and Tritheists and Sabellians, on the other^f. A late author on the same side of the question expresses himself to the same effect. "The almighty author of the universe is undoubtedly in the strictest sense of the expression, ONE. We acknowledge the glory and *pre-eminence* of the *first cause*, which is clearly due to him; he is God, *not of any other but himself, nor can any other be God, but of him*. But at the same time we think that it is no *diminution* to the Son, to say that he receives his essence by communication from another, though it were a *diminution of the Father* to speak so of him. The Father is not God by reason of the son, whereas the son is God by communication from the Father. Neither does this establish a plurality of Gods. For we say, there is but one person, who is *from none*. If there were more than one, it could not be denied, but that there were more Gods than one. But the Son and Holy Ghost have, for that reason, been believed to be one God with the Fa-

^e Sect. 4. chap. 4. § 2. Dr. Clarke's Ser. Doct. § 39.

^f Biograph. Brittan. Art. Bull. Note M M.

ther, because both are *from* the Father who is one, and so he is the union of them^g."

From these quotations (to which many more might be added) it appears that the Realists endeavour to obviate the charge of Tritheism, brought against them by the Nominals, by asserting the *Father alone* to be God of himself, *underrived, unoriginate*; but that the Son and Spirit are *neither*, as they receive their divinity wholly from the Father. God the Father is the God of the Son, even (as Dr. Owen observes) with *respect to his divine nature*. And thus by maintaining the *subordination* of the Son and Spirit to the Father, the *monarchy* of the universe is, as Bishop Bull asserts, preserved entire. Whereas, if they held the three to be equally *self-existent*, and *unoriginate*, they allow the charge of the Nominals would be just.

The Realists and Nominals, in our days, agree in the use of the same orthodox terms; though the ideas they affix to those terms be as different, as one infinite spirit, in which are three distinctions improperly called persons; and three infinite spirits, the first of which is self-existent, the second begotten, and the third proceeding from the two first, and all united in some myste-

^g Resignation no Proof. p. 43. as cited by Mr. Temple, in his Letters to Dr. Randolph. p. 242.

rious manner. Both urge their claim to orthodoxy, though it is impossible that both should be right. The adversary saith, that the former absolutely take away the unity, and the latter the trinity.

V. The Arians join with the nominal Trinitarians, Sabellians, and Socinians, in believing the one true God, to be one infinite mind, or spirit, and whom the scriptures call the Father. They join with the Realists in holding the Son, and Holy Ghost, to be spirits distinct from the Father, but subordinate and inferior to him. They differ from the Socinians, in believing the *word* to have been in the beginning, that is, before all ages, with the self-existent God; but not the self-existent God himself, with whom he was, according to the notion of Sabellius. The Son is, according to them, called God, not because of his metaphysical substance, but of his relative attributes, and the divine power and dominion communicated to him from the Father. They assert that the holy spirit, in scripture, is no where *expressly* stiled God, or Lord; or represented as sitting on a throne, or judging the world: that christians are never called in scripture *his* servants, or commanded to pray to him or praise him, or to ascribe glory and dominion to him; and that there is no scriptural example of either^b.

^b Dr. Clarke's Scr. Doct. pt. 2, § 25. Emlyn's Remarks on the four London Ministers, chap. 1.

Many of these positions are disputed. It is said that the holy spirit is plainly styled God. Acts v. 3, 4—to *lie to the Holy Ghost—thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God*. They answer: Ananias by lying to the Apostles, did, in effect, lie to the holy spirit, who dwelt in them; and by lying to the holy spirit, he, in effect, lied to God himself, who dwelt in them by his spirit: and they refer to Luke x. 16. 1 Theff. iv. 8. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Eph. ii. 21, 22. in support of their interpretation.

It is further objected to them, that they hold two Gods; God the Father, and God the Son. They give much the same answer as the Realists do to the like charge. See the foregoing quotation from Bishop Bull. There is in the “monarchy of the universe, but *one authority*, original in the *Father*, derivative in the *Son*; therefore the *one* God (absolutely speaking) always signifies *him* in whom the power or authority is *original* and *undervived*.” Whether this explanation of the divine unity be admitted, or not; in this respect there was no difference between Arius and the Nicene Fathers; for the *one God* with both, as appears from their creeds, was the *Father Almighty*. The ancients placed the divine unity in acknowledging the Father, alone, the fountain of deity; and his being solely *unoriginate*, *self-existent*, and inde-

z Dr. Clarke's Scr. Doc. pt. 2. § 39.

pendent;

pendent ; as Bishop Pearson, Bishop Bull, and Dr. Waterland, observed in the foregoing quotations. It is certain the scripture never *expressly* asserts, that the *Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one God ; or one in essence ; or one in consent and power**. These are the different explanations adopted by learned men, to solve the difficulty, that there should be but one God ; and yet the Father should, in scripture, be stiled God, the Son God, (which is denied by Mr. Lindsey, Sequel p. 199) and the Holy Ghost God, (denied also by the Arians.) All that the scripture *expressly* asserts, is, that *to us there is but one God, the Father ; that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father ; is stiled God, and one (εἷς one thing) with the Father, John xvii. 22 : and the holy spirit, the spirit of God, and of Christ ; but is never said, in the New Testament, to be one with the Father and the Son, except in 1 John v. 7, which Sir Isaac Newton has proved, as*

* It is said John x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* One what ? *one God*, say some, *one Essence*, say others ; but the text says neither. The Greek is, *εἷς one thing*. He that planteth and he that watereth are one, *εἷς one thing*. 1 Cor. iii. 6. 8. Paul and Apollos were not one man, or one in undivided essence. Query, whether Christ and the Father were one, as Paul and Apollos were one ; one in consent and will, agreeably to the words of our Saviour, *that they may be one even as we are one ?* John xvii. 21. 22.

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many learned men think, not to be genuine ; but to have crept from the margin into the text*.

The origin of the Arian controversy was this. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, maintained, in an Assembly of the Presbyters, of that city, that the Son was of the same dignity and essence with the Father. Whether Arius apprehended that this notion implied a division of the divine

* The common argument for the divine unity is this. The Father according to scripture is stiled God ; the Son God ; and the Holy Ghost God.

But the same scripture saith, there is but one God.

It follows, that Father, Son, and Spirit are one God.

Some have stated the same argument thus.

The Father according to scripture is stiled God ; the Son God ; the Holy Ghost is never expressly so stiled : Moses is called God, Exod. vii. 1. Angels and Magistrates are called Gods, Exod. xxii. 28. Psm. lxxxii. 1. 6, John x. 34. 35.

But the same scripture asserts, there is but one God.

It follows, that Father, Son, Moses, Angels, and Magistrates are one God.

Perhaps Matt. xxiii. 9. 10. may throw some light in reconciling the scripture to itself in saying, there is but one God the Father, 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; and yet calling other beings Gods. *Call no man your Father upon the Earth*, for *one* is your Father, &c. and yet Christians call men their *natural* and *spiritual* Father.—*One is your Master even Christ*, and yet men have masters besides him. Query then, whether *one* Father, and *one* master do not signify one supreme father and master ? So the one God signifies him, who by way of eminence is supreme.

essence

essence or substance, or introduced the Sabellian heresy, so it was, he opposed his Bishop, and asserted *there was a time when the Son was not; and that he was created out of nothing*. Alexander being disturbed by these positions of his Presbyter, commanded him to renounce them, and contended, that the "Son is from eternity, *immutable*, like the Father; excepting that he is not *unbegotten* or *self-existing*; that on this account, the Father is *greater* than the Son; and the Son is of a *middle nature* between the first cause of all things, and the creatures, which, from a state of non-existence, were called into being^b." The emperor Constantine condescended to mediate between these two zealots; found fault with Alexander, and told him he required from his Presbyters a declaration of their sentiments concerning a silly empty question: and Arius, that he had imprudently uttered what he should not have even thought of; and that questions about such things, proceed from an idle itch of disputation, and were of so high a nature as to be incomprehensible; and as they did not introduce any *new heresy, concerning the worship of God*, they should communicate with each other. This salutary advice was rejected, in consequence of which, the Nicene council was called in the year 325. This council decreed, that the Son was *consubstantial* (that is, having the same kind of

^b Jortin's Rem. Eccl. Hist. vol. 3, p. 47.

;Chandler's Introduction to the Hist. of the Inquisition, p. 25.
substance,

substance, as an earthly son, partakes of the same kind of nature with his father) with God the Father in opposition to Arius, who held they were of *different* substance, and in opposition to Sabellius, whose tenet was, that they were of one *individual substance*^k.—If these different notions of Arius, Alexander, and the Nicene fathers, be tried by the sacred writings, it will be found, that there is nothing in those writings said expressly concerning them. It is said, indeed, that Jesus is the *Son* of God, and the *only begotten* of the Father from which it has been infered, that as every son of man partakes of the nature of *his* father ; so Jesus, being the Son of God, partakes of the nature of God. But if it be considered, that Adam, Angels, and sincere Christians, are said in scripture to be Sons of God, and the last mentioned, partakers of the divine nature (Luke iii. 38. Gen. vi 4. Job xxxviii. 7. Rom. viii. 14. 2 Pet. i. 4.) the argument perhaps will not bear to have much stress laid upon it.—That the Nicene Fathers should decree Jesus Christ to be consubstantial with his Father, is not strange ; as it was believed in their days, that angels, and the souls of men, were generated from the divine substance. In this, as to human souls, they had the concurrence of the Philosophers of Greece

^k Ben Mordecai, let. i. p. 90. Jortin's Rem. Eccl. Hist. vol. 3, p. 96.

and Rome!.—Dr. Clarke asserts, that the scripture has no where at all declared what is the proper metaphysical *nature, essence, or substance*, of any of the three persons, but describes and distinguishes them always by their *personal characters, offices, powers, and attributes*; that the scripture never makes mention of any limitation of time, when the Son and Spirit derived their being from the father; nor of the *particular metaphysical manner* of their derivation, but supposes them to have existed with the Father from the beginning, and before all worlds^m. From hence it appears, by the way, that Dr. Clarke disavowed those peculiarities of Arius for which he was condemned, and therefore was improperly denominated an Arian. If the above assertions of the Doctor, be allowed to be true; all those disputes which have been carried on concerning the *essence or substance* of the three persons, and the precise manner in which the Son was begotten, and the Holy Spirit proceeded, have been about speculations of which men in the present imperfect state can arrive at no certainty. It is wrangling about

1 Jackson's Reply. Pref. p. 6, and p. 5. 55. 286. 328. Gibbon on the Decline of the Roman Empire, p. 467. Cicero saith, *audiebam Pythagoram, Pythagoreosque, incolas pene nostros, qui essent Italici Philosophi quondam nominati, nunquam dubitasse, quin ex universa mente divina delibatos animos haberemus.*—Cato major.

^m Scr. Doc. pt. 2. § 4. 13. 21. 22.

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what they have no idea of, and attempting *to be wise above what is written*. It is not the *essence* of God, simply considered, that is the object of our veneration, gratitude, praise, obedience, fear, hope, and trust; but his being our Father, Preserver, Benefactor, Sovereign, and Judge. Were it possible (with reverence be it spoken) that these relations were annihilated, and had no concern with us, and we had nothing to hope, or fear, from him, those duties of gratitude, praise, &c. would cease, notwithstanding his eternal essence. In like manner, whether the Son and Spirit be of the same essence with the Father, or not; the duties we owe them result from the character and offices they appear to sustain, according to scripture, in the important business of our salvation. The gospel was preached to the poor and unlearned; and therefore it cannot be thought that a wise, and a merciful being, would place their everlasting happiness on speculations concerning the *consubstantial generation* of the Son, and the *procession* of the Holy Ghost, in one numerical essence with the Father, unless he had *clearly* and *expressly* revealed them. On the contrary, in reading the New Testament, we find, as Dr. Watts justly observes, “ that the stress of our salvation is laid upon our humble sense of our sins, our return to God the Father, by sincere *repentance*, and change of heart and life, and our unfeigned *faith* in the Lord Jesus;” that is,

as

as the Son of God, the Messiah, the sent of God, acting in his name, and by his authority, and constituted by him an allsufficient Saviour and Lord. If the reader wishes to examine the ground of these assertions, he may consult the following texts: Acts xx. 21. Acts xvi. 31. Rom. x. 9. John xx. 31. Mark i. 15. John x. 25. John v. 30, 36, 37, 43. Matt. x. 40. Mark ix. 37. John vii. 16. John viii. 26, 28, 42. John xii. 44, 49, 50. John xiii. 20. John xvii. 21, 23. 1 Cor. i. 30. Heb. vii. 25. Acts ii. 36. Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. 1 Pet. i. 21. Eph. i. 22.

From the passages here referred to, it would seem, that our faith in Christ respects him as the person appointed and sent of God, to be the Saviour of the world, and that our dependence, and trust in his declarations, and promises, ultimately terminate in the Father, in whose name he appeared, whose will he revealed, and by whom he was raised from the dead, and made head over all things to the church; and therefore the belief of his *co-equality*, and *consubstantiality*, with the Father, is not essential to the comfort, and hope of christians, or their salvation.

The short account of the Tenets of Tritheists, Sabellians, Trinitarians, Socinians, and Arians, intended in this tract, is now before the reader.

Some difficulties attend each of these tenets, but which has the greatest difficulty, or comes nearest to scripture, is left to the inquisitive and unprejudiced to determine. The subject itself is of a mysterious nature, and men can know no more of it than God hath thought proper to reveal. When they have attempted to explain, what was not revealed of it, for the most part they involved themselves in great perplexities, and their explications terminated in some absurdity or contradiction. It has been an unhappy case, when such explanations have been obtruded as divine truths, and maintained with a zeal which consumed the benign spirit of charity. The humble, inquisitive, and serious christian, who wishes to model his faith of the trinity, not by custom, interest, or human creeds, but by the clear declarations of holy writ, should therefore, be careful to distinguish between the reasonings and speculations of men, and the express assertions of divine inspiration, and never to admit the former but as far as they are consistent with the latter. He should look into his Bible with the disposition of a learner, to receive what is there revealed, and not to seek for arguments to support a pre-conceived hypothesis; and in the course of his enquiries should not forget addressing God for his guidance. It may not be improper, also, to add, that it is an important part of wisdom to stop on this subject, where
revelation

revelation is silent, and not multiply conjectures, where reason hath no sufficient data to decide. The propriety of these reflections will appear evident, after the perusal of the subsequent remarks on the preceding systems relating to the trinity.

In order to decide on any scripture doctrine, the most obvious question is, whether it be *expressly*, or in so many words, affirmed in scripture? As Tritheists, Sabellians, and Trinitarians, *real* and *nominal*, express their opinions in the same phraseology, let us ask, doth the scripture *expressly* affirm that God Almighty is Father, Son, and Spirit, three persons, each God, and yet one God in essence? It is certain, no such proposition formally occurs in the sacred writings. How then, it may be asked, came christians to adopt this idea of God, that he is three persons, or three in any sense? the answer is, from reasonings on the peculiar and distinguishing titles, characters, and offices ascribed to Father, Son, and Spirit, in scripture, compared with the declarations, that there is but one God. Archbishop Tillotson observes, that the three in whose name every christian is baptized, “ are spoken of with as much distinction from one another, as we use to speak of three several persons. So that though the word trinity be not found in scripture, yet these three are there expressly
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and frequently mentioned ; and a trinity is nothing but three of any thingⁿ.—" Such different properties, actions, characters and circumstances are," saith Dr. Watts, " ascribed to these three, as are usually ascribed to three distinct persons among men^o." What is attributed to the Father, cannot be attributed to the Son ; and what is attributed to the Father and Son, cannot be attributed to the Holy Spirit. For instance, the Father is represented as having a Son, but this cannot be said of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is said to send both the Son, and Spirit. John xii. 49, John xiv. 26. But it is never said that they send the Father. The Son hath a body prepared him, and was made flesh. Heb. x. 5, John i. 14, but neither the Father, nor the Spirit, is said to be incarnate. Jesus Christ is spoken of as a mediator between God and Men, and, in one place, Rom. viii. 27, the Spirit is said to make intercession for the Saints according

ⁿ Sermon 48.—It cannot be proved that the word trinity, as applied to Father, Son, and Spirit, was used by any writer in the Christian Church before Theophilus Antiochenus, about A. D. 180. Dr. Scot's Essay on the Trinity, preface p. 9. See Ben Mor. let. 1. p. 106. The first creed that mentions any thing like an unity in trinity is that of Lucian the Martyr, about the end of the third century, and the words according to Athanasius were, " In substance they are three things, in agreement they are one." Mr. Robertson's attempt to explain the word reason, &c. p. 61.

o Dr. Watts's Chr. Doct. of the Trin. prop. 12.

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to the will of God; but God the Father is never affirmed to be a mediator, or intercessor, with the Son, or Spirit. The Son is said to live by the Father, and that the Father gave him to have life in himself, John vi. 57, John v. 26, but the scripture will by no means support us in reversing these declarations. These considerations, along with many others which might be adduced, justify christians in denominating the Father, and Son, distinct persons; meaning by person, a distinct, intelligent agent, according to the common acceptation of the word; but many have doubted the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. With submission, this seems to have been without just ground, as personal characters are ascribed to him. He is represented as sent, as coming, going, hearing, teaching, John xiv. 26, John xv. 26, 27, John xvi. 7, 13; as being resisted, and grieved, Acts vii. 51. Eph. iv. 30; as speaking, and commanding, Acts x. 19, Acts xiii. 2; and he is mentioned distinctly from the Father, and the Son, Matt. xxviii. 19, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, Eph. ii. 18, 1 Cor. vi. 11. In short, it is apprehended, that by the same kind of arguments that one should prove that Peter, John, and Paul, were three persons, the Father, Son, and Spirit may be proved to be such, that is, three spirits having distinct understanding and will. The Father, and Son, are represented as reciprocally knowing each

each other, and as having distinct wills, John x. 15, Heb. x. 7, John vi. 38; and the Holy Spirit receiveth that which is the Son's, and sheweth it to the apostles, and divideth to every man severally as he willeth, John xvi. 14, 1 Cor. xii. 11. Supposing it then proved, that the scripture will justify our calling the Father, Son, and Spirit, three persons, in the same sense that we should call three angels, or spirits, three persons, let us consider how the principles, before recited, of Tritheists, &c. will be affected.

We say then, that Father, Son, and Spirit, are each God, equal in power, dominion and glory. Then, there are three equal Gods. But we say, their essences are inseparably united; and thus, there is but one God. Let it be allowed; one God, in that case, is a compound of three Spirits or Gods, equal in all perfection. The Realist seeth the consequence, and intends to avoid it.—The Father “only hath it (his being) of himself, and is the original of all power and essence in the Son^p.”—“It is certain that the Son has his knowledge and every other perfection from the Father, in the same sense as he hath also his nature or substance from the Father^q.”—It is most reasonable to assert that there is but one person *who is from none*; and the very generation of the Son and procession of the Holy

^p Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 34.

^q Dr. Waterland's Serm. vii. p. 267.

Ghost undeniably prove that neither of these two can be that person. It followeth therefore, that this person is the *Father*, which name speaks nothing of *dependence*, nor supposeth any kind of priority in another." Admitting these principles of the Realists, let us consider the consequences which naturally flow from them. If then, we say that the father alone is *from none*, unoriginate, or self-existent, and that the Son and Spirit derive their essence and perfections from him, we say in effect, that the Father is most high, and that the Son and Spirit are inferior to him; for, according to our Saviour's maxim, *it is more blessed to give than to receive*. Acts xx. 35. and it seems agreeable to the principles of common sense to say, that he who alone is self-existent, and the fountain of deity, must be superior to those to whom these characters cannot be appropriated, as well as agreeable to the words of our Saviour, *my Father is greater than I—greater than all*. Here then, the system of the Realist is embarrassed. If he asserts, that the three persons are equally self-existent, and independent; by his own confession he runs into Tritheism: if he asserts, that the Father alone is *from none*, he makes the Son and Spirit to be *inferior* to him, notwithstanding a specifick sameness of essence; which is something like semi-arianism. To ob-

r Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 40.

viate fairly one of these consequences, requires uncommon dexterity: for by maintaining the perfect co-equality of the three persons, each as God, where is the talked of *pre-eminence* of the Father? where is the unity? if the Realist thinks he saves both by asserting the *self-existence* and *independence* of the Father, exclusively; by that very assertion he destroys the *co-equality*; or this paradox follows, *self-existence* and *independence* are no divine perfections; and there is no *inequality* between him who hath, independently, all perfection of himself, and them who, independently, have of themselves none: for it is to be remembered, that the *Realist* lays it down as an established principle to preserve the unity, that the Son and Spirit derive their nature, and all their powers from the Father. When these difficulties press hard, the derivation of the Son, especially, is said to be an eternal, immutable, and necessary *emanation*; as light from the Son; a tree from its root; or a river from its fountain. In this sense, it is doubted, whether, according to the analogy of language, God can, with any propriety, be called the Father of Jesus Christ; as the term, Father, excludes necessity, and implies freedom of will. Could any man, with any propriety, call his *arm*, his son *? These difficulties are pointed out,

* The reader may consult Ben Mordecai's Enquiry into the Opinions of learned Christians concerning the Generation of Jesus Christ, chap. 9, and Temple's Letters to Dr. Randolph, lett. 1, p. 7.

as an argument for the exercise of charity. In a word, the one God of the Realist is a compound of three Spirits, one underived, and two derived ; one a self-existent God, and the other two deriving their deity from him. It is a natural question for a humble enquirer to put in this place, doth the scripture explicitly give us, any where, this idea of one God ? The *nominal* Trinitarian, Sabellian, Arian, and Socinian, apprehend that it doth not. The *Nominal* adopts a system which appears to him less perplexed and encumbered with difficulties.—As being next in order, let us consider his system. As he expresses his ideas in the very same terms with the Realist, it becomes necessary to have an explanation of those terms.—Pray Sir, when you say, God is three persons, do you mean that he is three spirits, or one spirit ? One spirit.—Then how do you make it out, that he his *three persons*, or conscious agents, with distinct understanding and will ?—That is not my idea of person.—No ? Then, you depart from the idea of the scriptures, which speak of the *sacred three*, in the same terms, that men commonly speak of three persons properly so called. Sir, “ the sacred writings were not addressed to the literati, to philosophers, and scholars, but to the common people, and consequently, they used words in their plain popular signification.” But you are, by your scheme, forced to use the word

person in a sense contrary to its plain signification. The Father is a spirit according to the context, John iv. 23, 24. The Holy Spirit, by his very name, is a distinct Spirit from the Father; and the Son, as being begotten before all ages, and having a *body prepared him*, Heb. x. 5. and coming forth *from the Father into the world*, John xvi. 28. appears to have been a distinct spirit from both*. But, according to you, the Father, Son, and Spirit, each God, are but one Spirit, with one numerical consciousness and will, which seems irreconcilable according to the plain meaning of words with what we read in John xiv. 16, 17, 26. John xv. 16. Ephes. ii. 18. Ephes. iv. 4, 5, 6, &c. &c.. Let us consider a particular instance. *The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove upon him (Christ) and a voice came from heaven, which said, thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.* Luke iii. 22. According to the principles of the nominal Trinitarian, here is the one infinite Spirit descending on itself when united with man, and saying to itself in this state; thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased: or perhaps, more

* Divines frequently speak of a Covenant of Redemption, in which certain things were stipulated between the Father and the Son, prior to the incarnation.—Now, if the Father and the Son are only one Spirit, according to human ideas, there literally could be no Covenant, as only one mind, consciousness, and will, was concerned.

accurately thus, one distinction in the infinite mind, descending upon another distinction in the same mind incarnate, when the mind itself not incarnate, saith to it, thou art my beloved Son, &c.—The Nominals have been, for the most part, embarrassed about giving a definition of the word person. If they use it in a sense denoting different *relations* or *characters*, as when one and the same man may be said to be three persons because he sustains the characters of Father, Son, and Brother; or when George the third may be said to be king of England, king of Scotland, and king of Ireland; when they apply it in that sense to the trinity, they are Sabellians, and, in effect, destroy the real personality of the Son (excepting as man) and of the Spirit. When Saint Au'stin was asked what the three persons were, he said, "human learning is scanty, and affords not terms to express it. It is therefore answered three persons, not as if that was to the purpose, but somewhat must be said, and we must not be silent." What end can it answer to use a word which is not to the purpose, or contrary to its plain and popular signification? Would it not be better entirely to discard it?

The observations now made, shew, that the system of the Nominals is not without its great difficulties when compared to scripture, and though it certainly avoids Tritheism, yet it is not certain, that it keeps clear of Sabellianism. According to it, one and the same spirit is begotten, and yet unbegotten, and yet neither, but proceeding; one and the same Spirit is the sender, and the sent; is incarnate, and yet not incarnate; comes down from heaven (the human nature of Christ did not come down from heaven) not to do his own will, but the will of himself, who sent himself: in short, one and the same spirit gives and receives satisfaction, and yet doth neither; and is at once a necessarily existent God, a begotten God, and a God by procession. If the scriptures had expressly given this idea of the supreme being, christians would do right in implicitly receiving it as a sacred mystery, but as it is the result of human reasonings from revelation, they are justified in examining and rejecting it, if found not agreeable to that rule and standard of faith.

We are next in order, to consider the difficulties attending the *Sabellian* and *Socinian* schemes, but those difficulties are obvious to the attentive reader of the preceding remarks on *nominal* Trinitarianism respecting proper personality: for, according to the former, the three persons are only three names of one being; and
according

according to the latter, the Holy Spirit is but another name for the Father ; and the Son is a mere man. We will therefore pass on to consider the difficulties of what is commonly denominated *Arianism*. The Arians maintain the proper personality of the *sacred three* in the same sense as the *Realists* ; but they deny, that those three are ever expressly said in scripture to be *the one God*, or of one *generical* or *individual* essence, this being wholly the result of reasoning. On the contrary, the word *God*, according to them, when used *absolutely*, in scripture, never denotes three persons, but the person of the Father only. He is stiled the *one God*, in contradistinction to the Son and Spirit^u ; *the true God*^v ; *the only true God*^w ; *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.—The most sound Trinitarians acknowledge that the Father derives his nature and perfections from none ; he acts in subjection to the will of none whatever ; but all, the Son, and Spirit not excepted, act in subjection to his will. He hath all power, dominion, and sovereignty, original, underived, and independent on any, in and of himself. He is the fountain of deity. From these premises, acknowledged just by the orthodox, it is inferred by the Arians,

^u 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iv. 6.

^v 1 Thess. i. 9.

^w John xvii. 3.

^x 2 Cor. i. 3. Eph. i. 3, 17.

that the Son and Spirit are *inferior* to the Father; and that he alone is the supreme, independent governor of the universe. Trinitarians apprehend, that this inferiority degrades the Son and Spirit into the rank of *creatures*. Some allow the consequence; others reject that appellation, not only because the scripture never calls them creatures, but is entirely silent respecting their *essence* and *mode* of derivation; and therefore on a subject so mysterious, they think it best to determine nothing positively, lest they should incur the censure of *prying into things not seen*, and *attempting to be wise above what is written*. Their opponents consider all this as an evasion of the difficulty, and maintain, that if the Son and Spirit be not each God *in the same*, and *in as high a sense as the father himself*, they are *creatures*. Here the matter ultimately seems to depend upon a question in which both parties are concerned, namely, whether an intelligent being can derive his nature, and all his attributes from the self-existent God, and not be a creature? If this be possible, the Arian might assert the inferiority of the Son and Spirit to the Father, without degrading them into the rank of creatures: if not possible, the Trinitarian, who asserts that the Father alone is unoriginate, and independent, and the fountain of deity, hath reason to consider, whether his own principles be not, in reason,

y Dr. Clarke, Mr. Jackson, Dr. Daniel Scott, &c.

chargeable

chargeable with the same *degradation*.—Another objection against Arianism is, that it maintains two Gods, one supreme, and one subordinate. To relieve a little of the dullness of thus considering things pro and con, I shall quote the objection in the words of the ingenious Mr. Robinson in his *Plea for the Divinity of Christ*, who proposes it in a manner peculiar to himself; and I will introduce an Arian copying the manner and reasonings of that gentleman, in answering it; taking care to mark the words borrowed from different parts of the *Plea* by inverted commas.

“ I am Jehovah, and there is *none else*. There is
 “ no God besides me. A just God and a Savi-
 “ our, there is none besides me. I am God,
 “ there is none like me. Is there a God besides
 “ me? yea there is no God, I know not any.
 “ (Isaiah xlv. 5, 6, 21. Isaiah xlvi. 9. Isaiah
 “ xlv. 8) This is the God of my bible: but
 “ besides this God, there is in my proposition
 “ another God, a delegated God. Here are
 “ two Gods. Here is a supreme God, and a
 “ subordinate God; a natural God, and an arti-
 “ ficial God; a great God, and a little God.
 “ A philosopher has one God; a Jew has one
 “ God; a christian it seems has two Gods. What
 “ a world of difficulties belong to this propo-
 “ sition, &c.”

z Plea p. 67.

H

Nothing

Nothing can be more plainly and expressly asserted in scripture, than that there is but *one God, one Lord, and one Saviour*, but the same scripture also asserts, that there are *Gods many, and Lords many*, and different Saviours. Neh. ix. 27. Obad. 21. How to reconcile this apparent inconsistency is the difficulty.—The scripture no where declares explicitly, that the one God is Father, Son, and Spirit; but it doth explicitly declare, that *there is none other Gods but one*—and, *to us there is but one God the Father*^a. The Father is *the only true God*, according to our Saviour's testimony^b; and according to St. Paul, *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*^c. If, according to these express assertions, the Father alone be the one God, how can Christ be God is the question? “I am not a philosopher exercising the speculations of my uncertain reason to form a conjectural proposition,” but following the light which scripture affords me. I read just now from Isaiah, *there is no God besides me*, and yet I find God characterized the *God of Gods, and Lord of Lords*^d, that he is *great above all Gods*, and that there is none to be compared to him in heaven

^a 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6.

^b John xvii. 1. comp. with v. 3.

^c Eph. iv. 6.

^d Deut. x. 17. Dan. xi. 36.

or earth^e; and the most high God^f. If there were no God whatever, besides him who speaks in Isaiah, where would be the propriety of the scriptural phrases, *God of Gods*, and *God most high*?—*And the Lord said unto Moses, see I have made thee a God unto Pharaohg*. How is this? “Here is a great God and a little God; a natural God and an artificial God; here are two Gods.” I will examine further.—God directs Moses to say to the children of Israel; *thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people^b*.—*God judgeth among the congregations of the Gods. I have said ye are Gods, and all of you are children of the most high, but ye shall die like menⁱ*.—*Worship him all ye Gods^k*.—Can the Psalmist be right? I read just now from Isaiah, *there is no God besides me*; and here I read of God judging among the Gods, and these Gods are called upon to worship him. Why, here are a supreme God and subordinate Gods; a great God and little Gods; and the little Gods are to worship the great one.—“In a book of inspiration we may expect the utmost

^e Psalm xcv. 3. 2 Chron. ii. 5. 2 Chron. vi. 14. 1 Kings viii. 23.

^f Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20, 22. Psalm. lxxviii. 56. Psalm. lvii. 2. Acts. vii. 48.

^g Exod. vii. 1.

^b Exod. xxii. 28.

ⁱ Psalm. lxxxii. 1, 6.

^k Psalm. xcvi. 7.

"precision." In that book I read, *I will praise thee with my whole heart, before the Gods I will sing praises unto thee*¹.—*Jesus answered, is it not written in your law, I said ye are Gods*^m?—*The word was God. The same was in the beginning* WITH God_n.—*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever—wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows*^o.—God being with God; and God, even the God of that God whose throne is for ever and ever, imply, according to the plain meaning of words, two Gods: if equal, there are two most high Gods: if unequal, there is, according to Mr. Robinson's proposition, a supreme and a subordinate God. If Moses be not God; if Angels and Magistrates be not Gods, according to the above quotations; surely, the writers of the Old and New Testament "discovered great injudiciousness in the choice of their words, and adopted a very in-cautious and dangerous stile," though I dare not go so far as to say, as Mr. R. doth, that on that account their inspiration may be questioned; and yet, such certainly was the language they used in their addresses to men prone to idolatry. The difficulty remains still as great as ever. Let

¹ Psalm cxxxviii. 1.

^m John x. 34, 35,

ⁿ John i. 1, 2,

^o Heb. i. 8, 9.

us return once more to the passages in Isaiah. *I am Jehovah, and there is none else, there is no God besides me.* As a sound Trinitarian, Mr. R. must understand these words in one of these two senses. I am Jehovah, and there is no God besides *me* Father, *me* Son, and *me* Holy Spirit, that is, besides *us three*: or I am the *essence* of Father, Son, and Spirit, and there is no *essence* besides *me*. But why the personal pronouns, *I* and *me*, should be applied respectively to *several* persons, or to *no person*, but an abstract *essence*, contrary to their plain obvious meaning, it is difficult to say. Mr. R. observes, “there can be no better canon of
 “interpretation, than that which an amiable pre-
 “late has given us; scripture is to be taken in
 “that sense in which the common people who
 “heard it first took it.” Now, let us suppose the common people in Isaiah’s time, attending to the words under consideration; do you think they conceived that God whom the prophet announced to them, to be three persons; or no person; but the essence of three?—“Assuredly, the com-
 “mon people never thought of these senses.” Bishop Beveridge observes, that “the Jews, though they have had the law above three thousand, and the prophets above two thousand years among them, yet, to this day, they could never make this (the trinity) an article of faith,

but they, as well as the Mahometans, still assert, that God is only one in person, as well as nature^q.—If it could be clearly ascertained which of the three persons, or whether all together, were the one true God, whom the Patriarchs and Jews worshipped, we might then know, to whom to apply the scriptures cited from Isaiah, that there was *no God or Saviour besides him*, by which means, some part of the difficulty may be obviated. Let the attempt be made. *The God of Abraham*, saith St. Peter, *and of Isaac, and of Jacob, and the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus*.—Had Jesus a Son? No. Had the Holy Spirit a Son? No. Had God the Father a Son? Yes. Then the Father was the God of the Patriarchs, and their descendants, and is the person pointed out in Isaiah. Perhaps this may be a mistake, it was Jesus Christ that was there referred to. Suppose it, and then read the text.—Jesus Christ, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, &c. glorified his Son Jesus. Jesus, according to this comment, would be the Father of himself. It will not do.—*We have*, said the Jews, *one Father, even God*. *Jesus said unto them, if God were your Father ye would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God. It is my Father honoureth me of whom ye say*

^q Priv. Thoughts, pt. 2. p. 33.

^r Acts iii. 13.

he is your God^s.—If we admit this testimony of our Saviour, his Father was the God of the Jews, and he is the person pointed out in Isaiah. This is *the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and greater than all*^u, *the only true God* whom our Saviour worshiped, and taught his disciples to worship, and called *his God and Father*^v; the most high, whose Son Jesus was^w; that God our Saviour, who saved us through Jesus Christ our Saviour^x; that God, who anointed the God whose throne is for ever and ever, with the oil of gladness above his fellows^y; that one Lord, who made Jesus both Lord and Christ^z; and in short, *that God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto the Fathers by the Prophets, and hath in these last days spoken unto us by HIS SON*^a. This is the God of my bible. Mr. R. may possibly think, that if Jesus Christ be not included in this one God, he is no God at all; but if included, the difficulty will be solved. Let it be so. The Father and Son are the one God. How

^s John viii. 41, 42, 54.

^t Eph. iv. 6.

^u John x. 29.

^v John xvii. 3. Matt. vi. 9. John iv. 23. John xx. 17.

^w Luke i. 32. Mark v. 7.

^x Tit. iii. 4, 6.

^y Heb. i. 8, 9.

^z Mark xii. 29. Acts ii. 36.

^a Heb. i. 1, 2.

now stands his proposition ? Why just as before. There is a supreme God and subordinate Gods ; a natural God and artificial Gods ; a great God and little Gods ; for in that book where we may expect the greatest precision, angels and magistrates are stiled Gods ; and men *Saviours*, notwithstanding that it asserts, there is but one God and one Saviour.—At length, the solution of the difficulty seems to be this—" the one God, or the only God, are expressions in scripture which signify the most high God. This appears plain from other instances : thus, when it is said that God only is holy, though angels are likewise stiled holy, the sense must be, that he alone is super-eminently and unchangeably holy ; as likewise it is declared, that there is none good but one, that is, God, though we read of good men and good spirits. In the same manner, though there are Gods many, as St. Paul tells us, to us christians there is but one God the Father, one supreme God and Father of all, and all others derive their being, power, and authority from him, the chief and independent God of the whole creation^b." Here ends the whole affair between Mr. Robinson and the supposed Arian. Whose solution of the difficulty is most agreeable to scripture, let the candid and impartial decide. I proceed to consider other difficulties attending the several systems which have been recited.

^b Appeal to Common Sense, p. 40.

In reading the New Testament, the love of God in parting with his beloved Son, and delivering him unto death for our sakes, is spoken of in terms of the highest admiration; and the love of Christ is extolled as passing knowledge, for his willing abasement; that being *rich in the glory he hath with the Father before the world was, he became poor for our sakes*, John xvii. 5, 2 Cor. viii. 9; that *being in the form of God, he (Greek) emptied himself of it*, Phil. ii. 6, 7; *had a body prepared him*, Heb. x. 5; *came forth from the Father*, John xvi. 28; *came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him who sent him*, John vi. 38; *was made in the likeness of men: and found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself*, Phil. ii. 7, 8; *for a time was made lower than the angels*, Heb. ii. 9; *gave his life for a ransom for many*, Mark x. 45; *was raised from the dead*, Rom. vi. 4; *left the world, and ascended where he was before*, John xvi. 28, John vi. 62; *was highly exalted, and had a name given him above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess him Lord, to the glory of God the Father*. Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.

When we attempt to reconcile the tenets of the real Trinitarians with this scriptural representation of our Saviour's abasement and sufferings, we are perplexed with many difficulties: for the second person in the Trinity, as being

infinite and supreme, could not, for a moment, divest himself of his essential glory and blessedness; could not, for one moment, be out of heaven, any more than the Father, because he filled all places with his presence; nor could he leave his Father's bosom, or undergo the least pain, sorrow, or trouble, much less die, because this would imply *mutability* and *imperfection*, which are inconsistent with Godhead. When in the garden, Christ was in agony and sweated as it were great drops of blood; and when on the cross he cried, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me; as the second person in the trinity, he possessed complete blessedness equally with the Father, and sustained no suffering whatever: so that the foregoing scriptural account must, on the scheme of the Realists and Tritheists, be understood in some figurative manner, and not real. Where then, it may be asked, is the extraordinary love of God in parting with his Son, and the love of Christ in coming down from heaven, on their tenets?—Let us next examine, whether the tenets of the Sabellians, the Nominals, and Socinians, will tally better with the foregoing scriptures: and, for this purpose, let it be asked, whether Christ, as man, quitted the glory he had with the Father; came down from heaven, and was made flesh, &c.? The answer is easy; as man, Christ had no glory with the Father before the world was; could not be said to empty him-
self

self of what he was never possessed ; could not be said to come down from heaven, as he had not been there, &c. If these scriptures can be applied to him, it must be as God : but as God, they cannot literally apply to him. For, as he and the Father are but one infinite Spirit, can it be possible, according to human ideas, that one spirit can come forth from itself ; leave the glory which it had with itself ; and come down from heaven from itself ; and be at once the sender, and the sent ? It should seem then, that the representations of scripture of the love of Christ in leaving the bosom of the Father, neither suit the human nor divine nature, and therefore are words of which we have no ideas. That these are no inconsiderable difficulties appears from the embarrassment which Trinitarians, *real* and *nominal*, discover in speaking of the descent of Christ from heaven, and of his sufferings. “ Dr. South saith, it is *impossible* for the divine nature of Christ to come down from heaven.—Dr. Sherlock saith, that *properly* it cannot be.—Bishop Fowler, that he could not *properly* come down from heaven, any more than God the Father ; from whom he is inseparable ;—Bishop Bull, that his descent was *quasi* (as it were ;)—Dr. Waterland, that it was only in *appearance* ;—Cyril,

c See Dr. Watts's Imp. Quest. where this matter is treated in a more copious and forcible manner, and his scheme of the pre-existent Soul of Christ united with deity is set forth.

Epiphanius, and the Councils, that it was only a soul and body that felt the pain of the cross : the substance of Christ which was with God, from the beginning, being impassible^d." Thus, he that was in the beginning with God, and was God, according to the principles of the Realists, and Nominals, did not descend from heaven, because local motion is inconsistent with *Omnipresence*; was not literally humbled, because *immutable*; and neither *suffered*, nor *died*, because the nature of God is *incapable* of either pain or death.

If the scriptural account of Christ's descent from heaven be examined by the principles of the Socinians, it immediately occurs, that it must be explained away in some figurative manner; for, how could a mere man, who was never in heaven, be said to come down from thence; and having had his birth in mean and poor circumstances, should, from being rich, be said to be made poor, to have emptied himself of a glory, which he never had, &c.? Socinus was so sensible of the difficulty attending this part of his scheme, that he arbitrarily supposed, that Christ was taken up into heaven a little before he entered on his office, in order to be instructed in the things which he was to announce to the world, as well as to account for the representations of

^d Ben Mordecai's Enquiry, let. 8. p. 113. note.

scripture of his descent from thence.—The only remaining enquiry is, whether the tenets of the Arians, or those who hold the subordination of the Son to the Father, are encumbered with the like difficulties. If their own representation of the matter be believed, the love of God in parting with his beloved Son, and the love of Christ in leaving the bosom of the Father, coming down from heaven, humbling himself unto the death of the cross, and giving his life as a ransom for sin, are displayed in the most transcendent manner.—Here, saith one of them, “ Here was indeed a *love that passes knowledge*; here was *grace* indeed, here was an example of *humility* and *condescension* that admits of no parallel! not a *relative* humiliation, a *relative* or *nominal* suffering of the Son of God, by his uniting himself (as they speak) to a man, i. e. in truth to another person, while he *himself* really suffered nothing, underwent no diminution, but was all the while possessed of the highest glory, of the same unchangeable blessedness. No; we believe that *HE who was in the beginning with God*, and who *was a God*, really *came in flesh*, and *dwelt among us*; that he actually laid aside *the glory which he had with the Father before the world was*; that he divested himself of the *form of God*, and really *took upon him the form of a servant*, and *was made in the like-*

* See Toulmin's Life of Socinus, p. 182.

ness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. We believe, according to the scriptures, that the same excellent being who was the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person, by whom he made the worlds, was for a time made lower than the angels, and tasted death for every man; and believing this we own with St. Paul, a breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

The view proposed in the beginning of this tract is now finished. To such as have not been very conversant with the subject, a summary recapitulation of the whole will not, in this place, be disagreeable.

The Tritheist, as holding three distinct substances or spirits, equal in every perfection, holds three supreme Gods.—The Realist holds three Spirits, each God, and equal in every perfection, but avoids tritheism, as he apprehends, by saying the three are inseparably joined in one substance or essence. It is doubted whether this, in other words, be not saying, *three most high Gods in one substance.* The one only God upon these principles is one substance, whereas the scripture constantly speaks of God under *personal* characters,

f Tomkins's Sober Appeal, p. 205.

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and applies the pronouns *I, thou, he*, to him. The Realist's idea of the divine unity seems therefore inconsistent with the language of scripture. *God is a spirit*, according to the doctrine of Jesus Christ; but neither he nor his apostles have expressly declared him to be three spirits in one substance.—There is another method of maintaining the unity on the principles of the Realist. The father alone is self-existent and independent; the son and spirit derive their being and all their powers from him. From these premises it might be inferred, that the father alone is the most high God. No; the Realist contends, though the son and spirit have nothing of themselves, yet they are each God, in as high a sense as the father. Here is a dilemma: either self-existence and independence are no divine perfections, or the son and spirit are inferior to the father. To evade this difficulty, it is said, they are from *eternity necessary emanations* from the father, as rays of light are emanations from the sun. It is doubted whether, upon these principles, there can be consistently, with the analogy of language, either father or son_g: and considering

_g “ The Doctor (Randolph) indeed thinks to solve all difficulties by supposing the Son to be an *eternal* and *necessary Emanation* from the Father, he would do well however to consider whether *eternal Emanation* is not a contradiction in terms. In my apprehension, he who always was, would no more

dering the son as *infinite* and *immutable*, it is difficult to conceive how the scriptural account of his being in the form of God, and putting on the form of man, and coming down from heaven, suffering, and dying, and afterwards raised from the dead and exalted, can be literally understood of him. According to human ideas these things cannot literally be predicated of him as the most high God. In answer to these and similar objections, it is commonly urged, the doctrine is a mystery. What doctrine? that one God is a compound of three spirits? or that the one undivided substance of three persons co-equal and co-eternal, and each God, is the one only God taught in

more have *emaned* from the Father than the Father from *him*. If both co-existed eternally, then neither could *emanate*; because that which never wanted existence, could never receive its existence from any thing whatsoever: And what, I beseech you, is to *emanate*, but to *proceed* or *come forth* into existence from some extrinsic source? To *emanate* is therefore but another name for *beginning* to exist: but how could that begin to exist, which in every point of infinitely past duration, which *absolutely* without beginning, was just what it now is? Suppose a tree and its branches to have existed necessarily together from eternity; under that supposition the branches certainly never issued from the tree. To suppose them to have issued, would be to suppose, either that there was some point in infinite duration when the branches had no existence, which contradicts their notion of *eternity*, or that they issued when they were already in existence, which is the grossest of absurdities." Mr. Temple's Letters to Dr. Randolph, preface, p. 7.

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the scriptures? The objectors think it unfair to call that a scripture mystery, which is not expressly asserted in scripture, and is built only on men's inferences and deductions; and the reader will do well, in pronouncing on the several systems here recited, to keep in mind this important distinction, that his faith may not be founded on the wisdom of men, but on the revelation of God.

The Sabellian and nominal Trinitarian hold Father, Son, and Spirit, to be one infinite mind. How then can there be three persons? It is to be remembered, there are such distinct characters, actions, and circumstances ascribed to these three in scripture, as are usually ascribed to three distinct angels or men. The Father is the sender, the Son is the sent, and the Holy Ghost is sent by the Father and the Son. The Son was made flesh, the Father and the Holy Ghost were not. Now the difficulty is to conceive how, according to the obvious meaning of language, these three different characters and offices should be sustained by only one infinite mind, or spirit. Can one and the same spirit come down from heaven, and be incarnate, and yet not come down from heaven, nor be incarnate; be at once the sender and the sent; be at once Father, and the Son of the same Father, and yet be neither, but a third person proceeding from both; a self-existent

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God,

God, a begotten God, and yet neither, but a God by procession, ? It is a mystery. Doth the scripture *expressly* affirm that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one infinite mind, or the one God ? If it doth, the plea of mystery is good. If not, it may be only a plea to cover absurdities and contradictions arising from human schemes.—The scheme of the Sabellian and nominal Trinitarian reduces the second and third persons in the Trinity to mere *names, attributes, powers, or modes* of the one infinite Spirit, the consequence of which is, that Jesus Christ is a mere man, in whom the wisdom of the Father was manifested in a miraculous manner, and the holy spirit is the only energy or power of the Father, the one infinite mind, which is precisely Socinianism. This shews that the Sabellian, the Nominal, and Socinian differ only in words, but their ideas coincide, and their schemes in common labour under this difficulty, that they seem inconsistent with the actual humiliation and descent of Christ from heaven, such as, *that he came forth from God ; came down from heaven ; being in the form of God ; took upon him the form of a servant ; being rich ; became poor ; was made a little lower than the angels ; had a glory with the Father before the world was ; was before Abraham ; was found in fashion as a man, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended where he was before ; came forth from the Father into the world, then left the*
world

world and went to the Father. Are these scriptural passages, in their literal and obvious meaning, applicable in an easy manner to the man Jesus, who had no existence prior to his birth of the virgin, or to an attribute of God ?

The Arian joins with the Realist in acknowledging three real persons in the Trinity, and that the Father alone is self-existent, but differs from him in regard to the equality of the Son and Spirit to the Father. The Father is the most high God ; Jesus Christ is not the most high God, but *his* Son (the title God being given him on account of the power and dominion communicated to him by the Father) and the holy Spirit is not God himself, but *his* Spirit ; and called the Spirit of Christ because sent by him from the Father. The Arian scheme is charged with maintaining two Gods, one supreme, and one subordinate. Its abettors defend it by saying, that the scriptures themselves are liable to the same objection, because they denominate the one true God, *the God of Gods*, and the *Gods* are commanded to worship him, at the same time they assert, that *to us there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ.*—It is charged with bringing the Son and Spirit into the rank of creatures. This is allowed by some who favour it, because they have no conception of middle beings between the self-existent creator and crea-

tures ; while others are willing to leave the matter in that mysterious obscurity in which the scriptures have left it, lest they should *darken counsel by words without knowledge.*

A serious attention to these several schemes with their respective difficulties will, it is presumed, tend to repress a spirit of bigotry among persons of different apprehensions relating to the Trinity. But one inconvenience may arise from it to pious and humble christians, namely, that in their approaches to God, their minds may be filled with doubts, whether the object they are going to address be *three* persons, or *one* ; or *neither*, but *one individual essence* of three. To obviate this perplexity, I beg leave to lay before the reader, those considerations which give my own mind an undisturbed serenity in circumstances so interesting and awful.

Jesus Christ came to reveal the one true God, in a clearer manner, than he was before revealed. He himself worshipped this God, and taught his disciples to worship him. Could I worship God (thought I) under the same view, as my Lord and Saviour did ; or, as he expressly taught his disciples ; I should so far take the most effectual method to guard against error. Let me then ask, did he worship *himself*, jointly with his Father, and the Holy Spirit, as the Trinity,
or

or the triune God? If he did, let me do the same. If he did not, can I be wrong in following his example? Am I to be governed by the reasonings of men, and their schemes in this matter, or by the authority of the head of the church? I cannot for a moment hesitate.—I will examine then, to whom he addressed his prayers and thanksgivings.—*Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, FATHER—This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.—And now, O FATHER, glorify thou me—holy FATHER, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.—FATHER, I will that they also—O righteous FATHER, the world hath not known thee^b.—I thank thee, O FATHER, Lord of heaven and earthⁱ.—FATHER, I thank thee that thou hast heard me^k.—FATHER, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me^l.—FATHER, forgive them—FATHER, into thy hands I commend my spirit^m.* Jesus from these instances appears to have addressed his prayers, and thanksgivings, not to his own nature, or to himself, jointly with the Father, and Spirit, but to the Father only. If the Father be the Trinity, or the triune God, then, I also worship the Trinity.—I am, in the next

^b John xvii. 1, 3, 5, 11, 24, 25. ⁱ Matt. xi. 25, 26.

^k John xi. 41. ^l Luke xxii. 42.

^m Luke xxiii. 34, 46. See also Matt. xxvi. 53. John xii. 27, 28. John xiv. 16.

place, to examine the directions he gave to his disciples, concerning that God whom they were to worship. If he directed them to worship Father, Son, and Spirit, as the triune God, let me also do the same.—*But thou, when thou prayest—pray to thy Father.—Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.—After this manner pray ye, Our Father which art in heavenⁿ. The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.—The true worshippers shall worship the Father, for the Father seeketh such to worship him^o.—I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God^p.—Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you^q. Through him (Christ) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access by one Spirit to the Father^r.—And whatsoever ye do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and (even) the Father by him^s.—According to these plain directions of Christ, and his Apostles, I am to come to God the Father, through Christ, and by the Spirit. But is there in scripture one instance of prayer and praise addressed to God as Father, Son, and Spirit? Not one. Which then is it safer for me to trust to in a religious contro-*

ⁿ Matt. vi. 6, 8, 9.

^o John iv. 21, 22, 23, 24. See Matt. vii. 11.

^p John xx. 17. Rom. xv. 6. Eph. iii. 14.

^q John xvi. 23. See also John xv. 16. John xiv. 13.

^r Eph. ii. 18.

^s Col. iii. 17. See Heb. vii. 25. Heb. xiii. 15. Eph. v. 20.

verly; the plain directions, precepts, and example of Christ, and those of his Apostles; or the reasonings and inferences of later ages, supported by neither scriptural precepts nor examples? Here I cannot hesitate a moment in determining.—I leave this point to every one's own private judgment. I only suggest the considerations which give my own mind satisfaction in regard to the acceptable method of worshipping God, in order to obviate the doubts which might arise in the mind of a plain christian, from the difficulties I have shewn to attend the several systems of the Trinity. Indeed this plan of gospel worship has been generally acknowledged just by all parties of Christians. Dr. Berriman, a zealous advocate for the Trinity, in his Historical Account of it, saith, “ As the Father was constantly acknowledged (in the Christian Church) *for the fountain of the deity*, and *never* represented as *acting in subordination* to the other persons; who, on the contrary, were always considered as *subordinate to him*, and sustaining their respective *offices* in the work of our redemption. From hence it is no wonder if the prayers of the church should generally be addressed to the person of the Father, *through* the merits of Christ.—We acknowledge the plain footsteps of this worship to appear through *all* antiquity, and the church has deservedly continued it to this day. Let our
adversaries

adversaries make the most of this concession."—

And much the adversaries make of it; for say they, if prayers and praises are to be addressed to the person of the Father, through the mediation of Christ, the object of worship is not the Trinity; and, in truth, the scripture affords not so much as one *example* of prayer and praise so addressed, nor any *precept* for that purpose. But is not Jesus Christ worshipped in the New Testament? and if worshipped, is he not the most high God? Is not the worship of a creature idolatrous? The subject of these questions is considered in the appendix annexed.

z P. 152, 153.

AP.

A P P E N D I X.

Of the worship of Jesus Christ.

THAT Jesus Christ is worshipped in the New Testament, is a fact which is supported by undeniable evidence. But of what nature that worship is, whether civil or religious, supreme or mediatorial, is not agreed upon among christians. Dr. Waterland and the Trinitarians in general, contend that all religious worship is appropriated to God, and to him only ; and that the scripture gives no intimation of *supreme* and *inferior*, *mediatorial* and *ultimate* worship. Dr. Clarke and those of his opinion, on the contrary, affirm that the scriptures clearly do maintain this distinction, and that there is a worship given to the Son which cannot possibly belong to the Father ; a worship given to one person which cannot be given to the other. The Socinians, in general, allow that praise and honour will ever be due to Christ for his virtuous sufferings in the cause of truth and righteousness, but he is no object of prayer and thanksgiving when *unseen*, though with respect to this particular there have been among them some Exceptions^a. To decide on

^a Mosh. Eccl. Hist. vol. 4. p. 200. Lindsey's Apology, p. 138.

these contradictory opinions, it is necessary to ascertain the idea which the sacred writers affix to the term worship.—The congregation worshipped the Lord and the King^b.—Nebuchadnezzar fell down on his face and worshipped Daniel^c.—Abigail and Mephibosheth, according to the Hebrew, worshipped David in 1 Sam. 25. 23. 2 Sam. 9. 6. The word rendered *bowing* in the former passage referred to, and *doing reverence* in the latter, in our translation, is in the original the very same as is made use of in Psms. 132. 7. and 95. 6; O come let us *worship* the Lord our Maker^d.—The servant in the Gospel fell down and worshipped his Lord^e.—The man at the feast in the Gospel, was for his humility to receive *worship* from all at table^f: and persons were to come and worship at the feet of the church of Sardis^g.

These passages clearly shew, that the sacred writers did not appropriate the term worship to the services and homage paid to the supreme being, as it is customary at present, but used it to express in general, the respect and honour due

^b 1 Chron. xxix. 20. ^c Dan. ii. 46.

^d The learned reader may consult the following places in the Hebrew and Septuagint with the same view, Gen. xxii. 5.—xxiii. 7, 12.—xxvii. 29.—xxxiii. 36.—xlii. 6. If. xliv. 17.

^e Matt. xviii. 26. ^f Luke xiv. 10. ^g Rev. iii. 9.

from men to each other^b, or from men to God ; and here it is necessary to consider wherein the worship of God doth consist. It consists in solemnly acknowledging him to be the supreme Lord of the universe, self-existent, independent, and all-sufficient ; standing in awe of his power, fearing his displeasure, loving his goodness, praising him for his excellencies, thanking him for his bounty, imploring pardon for faults committed, and his grace to help in time of need, believing his word, trusting in his care, and submitting to his authority ; and this in a manner that may bear some proportion to his superlative dignity and dominion. It is presumed, that the particulars now enumerated constitute the most essential parts of religious worship. But may we not stand in awe and fear an earthly King, love him for his goodness, praise him for his excellencies, confess our fault, and ask pardon if we have offended him, thank him for his bounty, petition for the relief and assistance which he may have the power and right to grant, obey his just authority, and rely upon his word and promises ? This seems allowable upon the principles of reason and scripture, while a due regard is had to the real character, knowledge,

^b In the marriage ceremony the term worship means respect and honour, and is to be understood in a like sense when applied to magistrates or societies of men.

and abilities of the person addressed, our obligations to him, and dependence upon him, and his just authority over us. If this be allowed, it seems evident, that civil and religious worship differ not so much in *nature* as in *degree*; and may be higher or lower, supreme or subordinate, according to the known excellency and dominion of the object, the favours received, and the blessings expected from him. If that honour and reverence, submission, gratitude, and obedience which are due to God alone, be paid to man, to an angel, or to any other being whatsoever, that worship is idolatrous. But there may be a worship too submissive and lowly for the worshipper, and yet not be idolatrous. Of this nature was the worship which Cornelius paid to Peter, and John twice attempted to pay to the Angel.

In

i Acts x. 26. Rev. xix. 10.—xxii. 8. Cornelius, a Roman, received Peter “with a reverence esteemed the lowest and
 “most submissive even in the ceremonious East, and which the
 “Romans were wont to speak of as too solemn to be paid to
 “mere men, “Stand up, I myself also am a man,” “though
 “Cornelius intended nothing idolatrous, nor did “St. Peter
 “suppose he did. In truth, there was something extraordinary
 “in this prostration of Cornelius, but without any thing
 “of idolatry. He was a person of *rank*, St. Peter made no
 “figure in civil life, yet Cornelius received him not only with
 “respect, but as his superior; not only as his superior, but
 “with the greatest degree of reverence; not only with the
 “greatest degree of reverence according to the usages of his
 “own

In both instances it was too profound and disproportioned to the favour received, but not idolatrous. The worship paid our Saviour in the days of his humiliation by those who were healed by

own nation, but with an expression of veneration, which, though common in the country where Cornelius then resided, his countrymen were ready to say ought to be appropriated to those that were more than men; but it seems he felt the greatest degree of reverence and awe at sight of the Apostle, and those emotions threw him into the attitude he had frequently seen the inhabitants of Syria put themselves in, when they would express the greatest respect, the rather as the Apostle was a native of that country.

The case of St. John's throwing himself at the feet of the Angel, is to be viewed in a somewhat different light. St. John did nothing at all but what was *conformable to the usages of his own country*, when the people of it designed *innocently* to express great reverence and gratitude. It is astonishing then that so many learned men should have looked upon it as an idolatrous prostration. Nothing however is more certain than this fact: and it has been thus understood not only by controversial writers when disputing with heat against their antagonists, but by the more cool and dispassionate commentators. That they should not all consider the Eastern usages, is no wonder, they having been in common most unhappily neglected; but the attempt of the Apostle to repeat the prostration (for he would have done it a second time) sufficiently shewed, one would imagine, that the apostle did not think the Angel rejected it as an *idolatrous piece of respect*. What a strange interpretation must that be, which supposes St. John,

by him, was not as the God of Israel, but as his prophet, the promised Messiah, who had the power of healing the sick, and to whom the laws of nature were rendered subject. This appears

“ John, a Jew by descent, a mortal enemy in consequence
 “ by birth to all idolatry; a zealous preacher against it
 “ through a very long life; who finished one of his Epistles
 “ with these very words, “ little children keep yourselves
 “ from idols,” as desirous to have this perpetually fixed on
 “ their memories, whatever else they forgot; should, *when*
 “ *suffering at Patmos for the Lord Jesus; and when blessed*
 “ *with the influence of the prophetic Spirit; attempt to do an*
 “ idolatrous action, and to repeat that attempt in opposition
 “ to the checks of his *celestial teacher!* Nothing sure can be
 “ more inconceivable. At the same time nothing is easier
 “ than the true interpretation.—Smit with veneration for
 “ his angelic instructor, and full of gratitude towards him,
 “ for what he had shewn him, he fell, *according to the custom of*
 “ *his nation,* at his feet to do him reverence: “ See thou do it
 “ not,” said the Angel, *it is not to me these thanks are due, I*
 “ *have in this been only fulfilling the orders of him who is my Lord*
 “ *as well as yours; Worship God*” “ *therefore, to whom in justice*
 “ *you ought to ascribe these illuminations.* Beauteous was this
 “ turning away of the Angel from him in the Apostle’s eyes,
 “ and from the additional force of his graceful action, as well
 “ as from a lively sense, that though honours are due to
 “ God, as the original author of every good gift and in par-
 “ ticular of intellectual lights (James i. 17.) yet that it was
 “ fit to express a reverence *too* to them that are the instru-
 “ ments of conveying them to us, St. John, upon some
 “ further revelation of the Angel, would have again thrown
 “ himself at his feet, but found the Angel persevering in
 “ that most amiable and devout modesty—worship God.”

Harnier’s Observ. vol. 2. p. 35, 36, 37.
 from

from those instances in the gospels, where the people gave glory to God for the miraculous cures which Jesus had performed^k. In the same light the prayer of the blind man is to be considered, who *cried out, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me^l*; of the woman of Canaan who addressed him, *have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David^m*; and of the disciples, when they said, *Lord save us: we perishⁿ*;—*Lord increase our faith^o*. These addresses to our Saviour seem to have been made to him as the Messiah, and not as the one only God. This was certainly the case in the last prayer but one of the disciples just cited: for after our Saviour had rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm, the men, that is, the disciples who said, *Lord, save us, we perish*; *marvelled, saying, what manner of MAN is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him^p*? The prayers thus presented to our Lord as a great prophet, or the Messiah, were not idolatrous; (for it cannot be idolatry to petition that person for relief, or favour, who has knowledge of our wants, and power to grant what is desired) any more than it was idolatry in the third captain of Ahaziah *who fell on his knees before*

^k See Matt. ix. 8.—xv. 31. Luke vii. 16.—xiii. 13.—xvii. 15.—xviii. 43. John xvi. 30.

^l Luke xviii. 38, 39. Mark x. 47, 48. Matt. ix. 27, 28.

^m Matt. xv. 22. ⁿ Matt. viii. 25. ^o Luke xvii. 5.

^p Matt. viii. 26, 27.

Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants be precious in thy sight. If these observations on the nature of worship are allowed to be just, there may be a supreme and inferior worship. Of which kind that is which is to be given to our Saviour can be best known from those passages in the New Testament which relate to the subject.—The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son; even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honour-eth not the Father which has sent him. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—When he bringeth his first-*

q 2 Kin. i. 13.

* *Kαὶ ὡς* even as in St John's stile never signifies an exact equality, but only a general similitude. John xvii. 11, 14, 21, 23. 1 John ii. 6.—iii. 3, 7.—As the Jews already believed in God, so they should also for the future believe in Christ, John xiv. 1; as they already honoured the Father, so they should also for the future honour the Son of God; honour him, as having all judgment committed unto him; ('tis the reason alledged by our Saviour himself in this very text) honour him to the honour of the father who sent him; acknowledge him to be Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Dr. Clarke.

† John v. 22, 23. ‡ Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.

begotten

begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the Angels of God worship himt.—To him (Jesus Christ) be glory both now and for ever. Amen.^u—Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.^v. The four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb—saying—thou art worthy—for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood—and hast made us unto our God kings and priests^w.—Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever^x.—Salvation to our God which sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb^y.

The question to be determined from these passages of scripture is, whether the worship and

^t Heb. i. 6.

^u 2 Pet. iii. 18.

^v Rev. i. 5, 6.

^w Rev. v. 8, 9, 10.

^x Rev. v. 12, 13.

^y Rev. vii. 10. As worship in several of the scriptures now cited is paid to God and the Lamb, it may be inferred that the same worship precisely is to be paid to both. When this hath been urged, the answer was, *And the congregation worshipped the Lord and the King*, 1 Chron. xxix. 20. See Exod. xiv. 31. Numb. xxi. 7. Judg. vii. 18, 20. 1 Sam. xii. 18. 2 Chron. xx. 20. 1 Cor v. 4. 2 Cor. viii. 5.

M

honour

honour here ascribed to Jesus Christ are, as the *most high God*, or as *Mediator*? Trinitarians in general say the former: Anti-Trinitarians the latter. Let us suppose the following prayer. "I worship thee the most high and independent God, who hast *had judgment committed thee, and wast sent*; who *wast exalted and hadst a name given thee above every name, and that every tongue might confess thee Lord to the glory of another*; and art worshipped by angels by the *command of another*; I bow the knee before thee the *immortal* God who *wast slain*, and hast redeemed me to God by *thy blood*; to thee be glory for ever." If such a prayer be *unsuitable* to the character and attributes of the most high God, and *suitable* to the character and office of Jesus Christ as Mediator, and constituted Lord of all things; then the scripture admits of supreme and inferior, mediatorial and ultimate worship; and there is a worship paid to the Father, which cannot belong to the Son; and a worship paid the Son, which cannot belong to the Father. The Father is worshipped through a Mediator, Jesus Christ is worshipped as Mediator to the glory, and by the appointment of the Father. "The command of God," saith Dr. Owen, "is the ground and reason of all religious worship. The angels are to worship the Lord Christ as Mediator, and the ground of their doing so is God's command.

He

He saith *worship him all ye angels.*^z Bishop Sherlock also observeth, “ if we honour Christ in consequence of the power and glory conferred on him by God, and in virtue of a command received from God, to honour the Son even as we honour the Father, then the honour we pay to Christ is part of the service we owe to God, and arises even out of that command, *thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*^a” But many who allow that Jesus Christ is to be worshipped as the appointed mediator, Lord, and Judge, in obedience to the will of the Father; by presenting their prayers to God in his name, commemorating his death, acknowledging his authority, depending on his promises, and hoping through him for acceptance and salvation; yet scruple to direct their prayers and thanks *immediately* to him, because they consider these as the highest acts of religious worship, the incommunicable honour and prerogative of God alone^b: while others think themselves authorized by the Godlike perfections and high offices of mediator, high priest, head over all

^z Owen on Heb. vol. 1. p. 98. Mr. Hervey in his Letters, vol. 1. p. 137, apprehends the command to the Angels was referable to the *humanity* of Jesus Christ.

^a Serm. vol. 4. p. 67.

^b Lindsey's Apology, p. 137. Mr. Jebb's Letter. Theophanes's Letters to Dr. Horne on the Worship of Christ. Cardale's Enquiry, p. 49.

things to the church, the Lord and Judge of mankind* with which the Father hath invested him; and by scriptural example, to direct their prayers, praises, and thanks to him; being persuaded that idolatry doth not consist in asking favours from a being who hath the power and right of dispensing them from God, and is exalted to be a *Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins*; and in giving him praise and thanks for his condescension and loving kindness; this worship being not a worship independent of the Father, but terminating in his glory. While maintaining these different opinions, both parties acknowledge, that there is no express command through the whole New Testament to christians, to direct their prayers and thanks to Jesus Christ; on the contrary, Jesus Christ himself invariably directed his prayers, praises, and thanks to the Father, as his God; and taught his disciples to do the same, in his name. *The true worshippers, saith he, shall worship the Father. In every thing by prayer and supplication and thankf-*

* See Mr. Farmer on Miracles p. 370. "The Messiahship of Jesus denotes his regal commission and power, or his right by divine designation to dominion and judicature over mankind."

c Whitby's Last Thoughts, p. 23, 24. Ben Mordecai, lett. 3. p. 100—107. Letter to Mr. Jebb on the lawfulness of religious addresses to Jesus Christ.

d John iv. 23.

giving,

giving, saith St. Paul, *let your requests be made known to God*. The advocates for religious addressees to Jesus Christ as mediator, therefore, ground their practice chiefly on apprehended scriptural examples. The example of Stephen has been often urged. *Thus they stoned Stephen who was calling on* (God is supplied by our translators, and for that reason is printed in *italics*) *and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*.^f “This can be no “precedent,” saith Mr. Lindsey, “for directing prayer to him *unseen*, or addressing him as God, whom the blessed martyr declares he saw with his eyes, and calls him, v. 56, *the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God*; calls him *the Son of Man* in that his highest state of exaltation. *Son of Man, and God most high—what a space between*?”—Considering the time that must have necessarily elapsed between the vision and the invocation of Jesus, it is doubtful whether the vision continued so long; and it has been urged with great appearance of reason, that “the fitness of the prayer to Christ did not depend upon his being visible to him (Stephen) but upon Christ’s capacity of knowing his petition about his departing soul, and his power to grant the benefit he desired; which every one who believes Jesus to know men’s thoughts and words, and to be vested with

^e Phil. iv. 6.

^f Acts vii. 59.

^g Apology, p. 129. Sequel, p. 69—71.

the disposal of celestial glory and happiness, must be satisfied would have been the same, though he had been at that time invisible to his faithful and suffering servant. This then appears to me a good precedent for supplication by all who entertain such worthy and just sentiments concerning him in every condition and circumstance wherein they may be situated, but especially when they are about to die, by the removal of the soul from the body to which it is here joined as an instrument of action and subject of government^b." What seems to confirm these observations is, that our Saviour is spoken of as *having the keys of hell* (*αδης* the unseen world) *and of death*; *as he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth*^k; and who, St. Paul was persuaded, *was able to keep that which he had committed unto him against that day*^l of Judgment.

Rev. xxii. 20. *Come Lord Jesus*,—John xx. 28. *Thomas answered and said unto him (Jesus) my Lord and my God*; are adduced as instances of the religious invocation of Jesus. The answer is, that the former instance can be no precedent for prayer to him, as the words are only an answer of the Apostle to Jesus that appeared to him in vision and had said *I come quickly*. It is doubted

^b Letter to Mr. Jebb, p. 6. ^k Rev. i. 18.

^l Rev. iii. 7. ^l 2 Tim. i. 12.

by several whether the latter instance is at all an invocation of our Saviour, because in the 17th verse he speaks of ascending to his Father, and the disciples's Father; to his God and their God. The words of the Apostle are therefore taken as a sudden transport of wonder and joy at finding his Saviour, who had been crucified, alive; as if he had said, " my Lord and my God! that an " event which appeared so incredible should actually be true, as the resurrection of my Master " and Saviour from the dead!" Those who admit this comment will not think it dissimilar to the exclamation of Gideon. *And when Gideon perceived that he was an Angel of the Lord, Gideon said, alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an Angel of the Lord^m.*

2 Theff. ii. 16, 17. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father which hath loved us and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and stablish you in every good word and work.* This is said to be a prayer to Jesus Christ and the Father. The answer is that it is only a pious wish like, Rev. i. 4, 5ⁿ.

2 Cor. xii. 8. *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me.* It is not

^m Judg. vi. 22. See Luke xxiv. 41.

ⁿ See also 1 Theff. iii. 11. 1 Cor. i. 3.

certain whether the word *Lord* in this passage denotes the Father, or Jesus Christ. It seems most probable that the latter is meant, because of what follows. *And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness: most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities that the POWER of Christ may rest upon me.*

2 Pet. iii. 18. *Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to him be glory both now and forever^p.* This seems a plain instance of glory ascribed to Christ unseen, as well as that in Rev. v. 12, 13; because every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, was heard by St. John, saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne and unto the lamb. The plea that the object was *visible* to every creature in heaven and earth and under the earth is from the nature of it inadmissible. *Theosebes* when contending that no religious addresses should be presented to Jesus Christ, saith, “St. Paul’s doctrine is that we *should give thanks to the Father^q.*” But *Theosebes* seems to have forgotten, that St. Paul also *thanked Jesus Christ his Lord who had enabled him and put him into the ministry*, 1 Tim. i. 12; and it is observable that he was not *visible* to the Apostle.—Whether

^o See Acts i. 24.

^p See 1 Pet. iv. 11.

^q Letters to Dr. Horne, p. 11.

the scriptural passages now recited will justify Christians in presenting prayers, praises, and thanks to Jesus Christ as Mediator, and Lord of his church, is left to the impartial consideration of the Reader. In support of the practice of religiously invoking Christ in prayer, it has been said, that the first converts to christianity are characterized in the New Testament, by the distinction of such as *called upon his name*. Ananias speaking of Paul before his conversion expresses himself thus to our Lord. *He hath authority from the chief Priests to bind all that call upon thy name*; and after his conversion, the people asked, *is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem?*—*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord.*—*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*—*All them that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.*—Much criticism has been employed to shew the different senses of which the greek word for *calling upon* is susceptible, such as *appealing to*^v; *referring a cause to*^w; *submitting to the jurisdiction or authority of another*^x. Allowing these

r Acts ix. 14. 21. s Acts xxii. 16. t Rom. x. 13.
 * 1 Cor. i. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 22. v Acts xxv. 11, 21, 25.
 w 1 Pet. i. 17. 2 Cor. i. 23. x Acts ix. 14, 21. 1 Cor.
 i. 2. See Theoseb's second letter. Dr Clark's Scr. Doct.
 No. 691. Serious Enquirer's Objections to Mr. Lindsey,
 p. 60.

criticisms their due weight, it still remains certain, that in Acts vii. 59. the phrase *calling upon*, signifies direct invocation by prayer; and that prayer is directed to Jesus; and the same phrase is made use of by the greek translators of the Old Testament to express the invocation and worship of the one only Lord God. Thus Abraham and Isaac are said to have *called upon the name of the Lord*, to express their worship of him. And if the phrase hath this signification in the greek translation of the Old Testament, why should it not have the like signification in the New, when applied to Jesus Christ, especially, as he is represented as the searcher of the hearts of men, and endowed with that knowledge of their thoughts, intentions, and works, which qualifies him to be their equitable and final judge?—To invalidate the force of these arguments in favour of religious addresses to Jesus Christ, it is said, that he hath entirely forbidden them in John xvi. 23. *In that day ye shall ask me nothing, verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my name he will give it you.* These words were occasioned (as appears from v. 17, 18, 19) by a doubt which the disciples entertained respecting an expression which our Saviour had used in relation to their *not seeing him a little while, and a little while*

y Gen. xii. 8. and xiii. 4. and xxi. 33. and xxvi. 25. See Whitby's Note on 1 Cor. i. 2. A letter to Mr. Jebb. p. 30.

afterwards, seeing him. Jesus knowing their desire to ask him, among other things said, " In that day, when I shall have ascended into heaven and sent the comforter, ye shall no more ask me for the solution of your doubts, as you now do; verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever assistance ye ask the Father in my name will be granted you." If the words be understood as an absolute prohibition of prayer to our Saviour, it would follow, that Stephen, when full of the Holy Ghost, committed an act of impiety, if not of idolatry, in his dying moments, which seems an absurdity too gross to be admitted.—It is further objected against presenting religious addresses to Jesus Christ, that it is not known that God hath endowed him with that vast power, knowledge, and omnipresence to the things of this world and the hearts of men which will qualify him to hear and answer their prayers^z.

It is replied, that though the scripture represents our Saviour as ignorant of the day of judgment^a, and that the knowledge of the great events of his church were revealed to him^b; from which it appears he is not omniscient in the same extensive sense as the father is, yet an acquaintance

^z Lindsey's Sequel, p. 72. ^a Matt. xxiv. 36.

^b Rev. i. 1. See Serious Enquirer's Objections to Mr. Lindsey's Interpretation of John's Gospel, p. 53.

with the thoughts and intentions of men's hearts, and their state and circumstances, seems absolutely necessary to qualify him to execute the high offices of *Mediator*, *Intercessor*, *head over all things to the church*, *King of Christians*, and the final *Judge of mankind* who is to *render to all according to their works*. To assert the contrary seems a reflection on that divine wisdom which appointed and raised him to these high offices, Whatever difficulty there may be in explaining the manner in which our Saviour obtains and exercises this knowledge, the scripture evidently ascribes it to him, both by implication and express words. In the days of his humiliation, he discovered a thorough knowledge of the thoughts, secret purposes, reasonings, doubts, and prejudices of those with whom he was connected; and it is expressly said, *that he knew all men; and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man*^d; and needed not that any should ask him. *He knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him*^f. Even the prophets occasionally knew the secret thoughts and transactions of men at a distance. Ahijah knew the thoughts of Jeroboam's wife^g. Elifha knew the conduct of Geliaz, at a distance

^c Matt. ix. 4. and xii. 25. Mark ii. 8. and ix. 33, 34, 35. Luke vi. 8. and vii. 39, 40. and ix. 47. ^d John ii. 24, 25. ^e John xvi. 30. and xxi. 17. ^f John vi. 64. ^g 1 Kings xiv. 5, 6.

from him, and the secret counsels of the Assyrian king^b. Daniel knew the thoughts of the King of Babylon on his bed^c; and Peter knew the secret transactions of Ananias^k. Now if the prophets were possessed of this knowledge by the inspiration of God, there is nothing incongruous to reason in admitting, that by an union with the Father^l, or in some other manner, Jesus Christ hath a perfect knowledge of the affairs, circumstances, thoughts, intentions and actions of men; though not strictly acquainted with all that pass in the universe. This may be inferred from the extraordinary and peculiar powers communicated to him; such as *having all power in heaven and earth^m. Having life in himselfⁿ; being the beginning (αρχή the head) of the creation of God^o; head in all things to the church^p; Lord both of the dead and living^q; Lord of all^r; to whom the Father hath committed all judgment; and gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is the son of man^s.—It behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that he himself hath suffered, being*

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| <i>b</i> 2 Kings v. 25, 26.—vi. 12. | <i>i</i> Dan. ix. 29. |
| <i>k</i> Acts v. 4. | <i>l</i> John x. 38. and xiv. 10, 11, 20. |
| <i>m</i> Matt. xxviii. 18. | <i>n</i> John v. 26. |
| <i>p</i> Eph. i. 22. | <i>o</i> Rev. iii. 14. |
| <i>q</i> Rom. xiv. 9. | <i>r</i> Acts x. 36. |
| <i>s</i> John v. 22, 27. | |

tempted,

tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted; he hath compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; and is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Whatsoever, saith he, ye shall ask (of the Father) in my name, that will I do; if ye ask any thing in my name I will do it. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works—even as I received of my Father. It should seem from hence, that it pleased the Father, that in Christ all fullness should dwell for knowing the circumstances and wants of men, and therefore for hearing their prayers as Mediator. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things; that is, all that believe in him, with spiritual and divine blessings. God hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

The difficulties now pointed out on the principles of those who hold the inferiority of Jesus

† Heb. ii. 17, 18. * Heb. v. 2. † Heb. vii. 25.
 † John xiv. 13, 14. * Matt. xviii. 20. † Rev. ii. 23,
 27. * Col. i. 19. Eph. iv. 10.—ii. 22, 23.

Christ

Christ to the Father, will probably appear to a Trinitarian who holds his *perfect equality* with the Father, as the natural consequence of error, and from which his own scheme is totally exempted. How far this presumption is just, will soon appear. It is the doctrine of the New Testament, that Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man: and he is spoken of as interceding for sinners, touched with a feeling of our infirmities, having compassion on the ignorant, and them that go out of the way; and, having been tempted, is disposed to succour them that are in like circumstances. It is asked, doth Jesus Christ perform this office of a compassionate and sympathizing high priest as God most high, or as man? As God; then one supreme God intercedes with another supreme God; or intercedes with himself, which, according to human ideas, is no intercession. As man then; then, as man, how knows he the state and peculiar circumstances of all his people upon earth? or is his intercession general without the knowledge of particular persons and cases? No; he knows them as God;—consider; *as God* he is not an intercessor. As God, it is said, he knew the day of judgment, but *as Man* he did not know it. How are we assured that as *Man* he knows our peculiar temptations and distresses, in order to intercede in our behalf? At length the matter must come to this, the divine nature communicates
this

this knowledge to the human nature ; and why may not God, on the Arian or Socinian principles, communicate the same knowledge to the Logos, or the man Jesus, or have capacitated him for the exercise of it in some unknown manner^a ? Thus neither scheme is without its difficulty, or the same difficulty affects all, as far as the knowledge of Christ, in a human capacity as mediator, is concerned.

These disquisitions on the worship of Christ are humbly offered, not only to give a general view of the subject, but to promote moderation among Christians of different opinions relating to it. They may assist, it is presumed, the serious enquirer to decide on some late controversies, and dispose him to judge candidly of the probity of those who unhappily may appear to have fallen into error. Perhaps the observation of Mr. Bennet, the pious author of the Christian Oratory, may, upon the whole, appear to be founded in truth, viz. " That our chief concern with the son of God is as mediator. We are neither concerned to know precisely what he was before he was incarnate, how employed in the world above, nor what he will be, and how employed, after his mediation is finished ;—our

^a See Emlyn on the Worship of Jesus Christ, p. 94, 95. Dr. Watts on the Glory of Christ, p. 118.

present business is with the mediator whom God hath exalted, and to whom every knee must bow, and shall bow at last, till the end cometh; and he hath delivered up the kingdom to his father^b." It seems to be a fact well authenticated, that there is no express command in the whole New Testament for Christians to direct their prayers to Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit; on the contrary, it is certain, that Jesus Christ invariably prayed to his Father as his God, and instructed his disciples to observe the same religious practice; and it is generally agreed upon by Christians of different denominations, and opposite opinions in other respects, that the standing rule of Christian worship is, to present our prayers, praises, and thanks to the Father in the name of Christ, and by the Spirit: but whether the texts which have been adduced in the course of this disquisition do not also authorise prayers, praises, and thanks to Jesus Christ as the *Mediator* of God's appointment, and his *Minister* in dispensing his blessings, deserves sober consideration. The plea that he is not qualified to know men's thoughts and circumstances is of an alarming tendency, as it eventually may lead us to doubt whether he is qualified to discharge the high offices of Mediator, King, and Judge of mankind, to which God hath exalted him. As

^b Vol. 2. p. 178, 179.

our knowledge of whatever relates to these important particulars can only be derived from scripture, so by scripture let the faith of Christians be regulated concerning them. Clear scriptural precepts and apostolical examples are safe and sufficient guides for devotional practice ; while that which is founded on the speculations and reasonings of men, and supported by neither scriptural precepts, nor apostolical examples, is in danger of being erroneous, and of engendering *strife, railings, and evil surmisings* among those who acknowledge the same master, and ought to be united by benevolence and kindness. Perish the systems of Philoponus, Sabellius, Athanasius, Arius, and Socinus, as *standards of faith and worship to Christians ; built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom, as a spiritual building fitly framed together, may they grow to be an holy temple in the Lord, an habitation of God through the Spirit!*



F I N I S.

